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OVER 25 NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS INSIDE

PABLO ESCOBAR • JACK THE RIPPER • NED KELLY • AL CAPONE • BILLY THE KID

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From cold-blooded killers and violent outlaws to deadly mobsters and the highwaymen of yore, crimes and the individuals behind them have captured the imaginations of people the world over since time began.

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CONTENTS

MURDER

008 Jack the Ripper
014 Elizabeth Báthory
020 Billy the Kid
028 Gilles de Rais
034 Belle Gunness
038 Marcel Petiot
044 Amelia Dyer

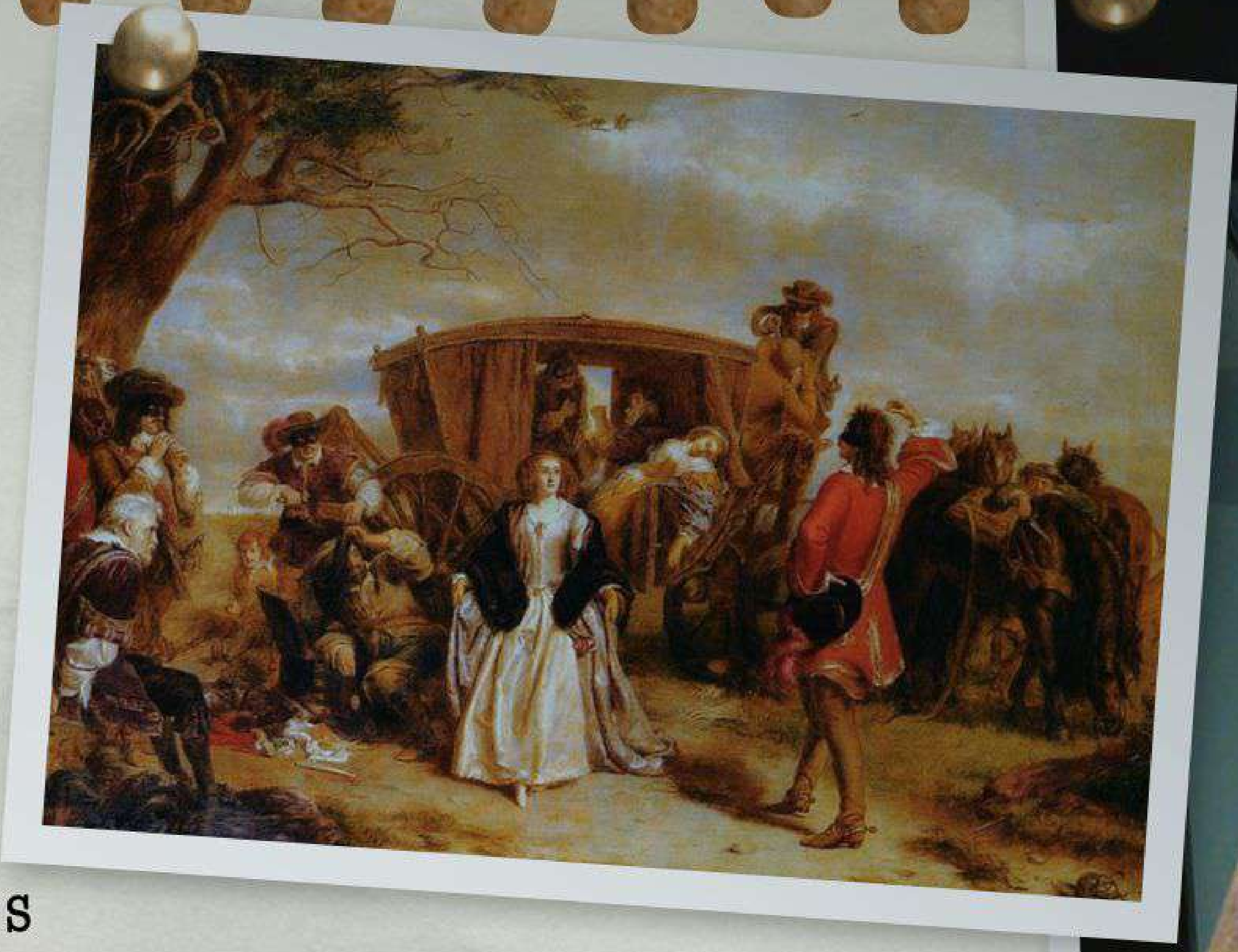
ORGANISED CRIME

050 Al Capone
058 Bugsy Siegel
064 Pablo Escobar
072 The Krays

B0351
4-12-28
CARCEL DTTO JUDICIAL
MEDELLIN
128482

ROBBERY

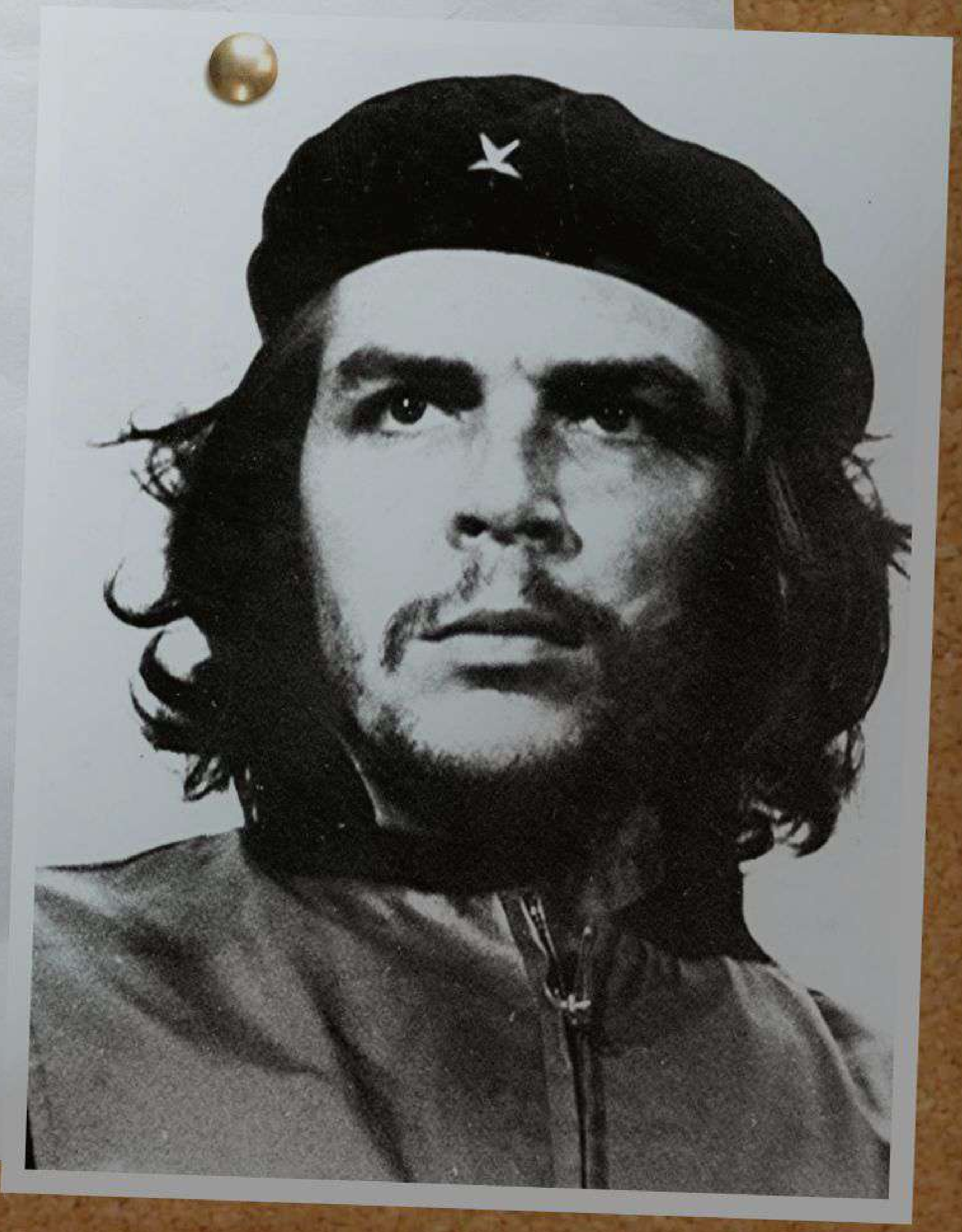
076 Robin Hood
082 Dick Turpin
086 Blackbeard
094 Ned Kelly
100 Katherine Ferrers
104 Jesse James
108 Butch Cassidy
112 Public Enemies



"DISCOVER THE LIVES AND CRIMES OF SOME OF HISTORY'S MOST NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS"

TERRORISM

120 Guy Fawkes
130 Che Guevara
138 Osama bin Laden



Jack the Ripper

History's most infamous serial killer stalks the streets and the police hunt for him grows more desperate with every gruesome murder

August 31st 1888. The East End of London is not unaccustomed to violence or murders, but on Buck's Row lies a body that has been mutilated beyond even Whitechapel's reputation for depravity. Her throat cut and abdomen gashed, Mary Ann Nichols, known as Polly, has become the first unwitting victim of the modern era's most notorious serial killer.

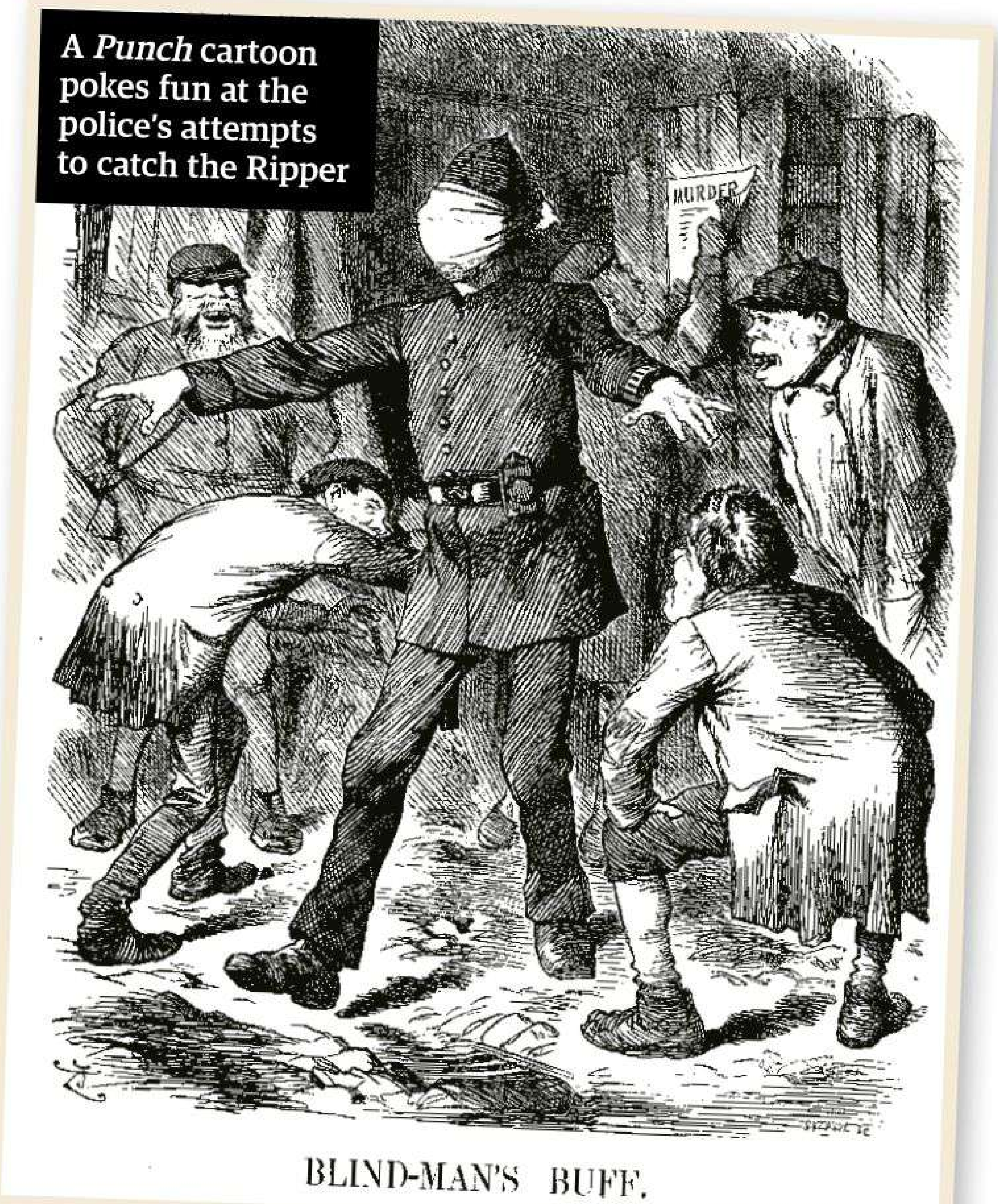
Polly Nichols is widely considered the Ripper's first victim and shares a similar profile to most of his later victims. Estranged from her family, Nichols has worked the dark streets of Whitechapel for most of the decade. Known for her love of drink and with a turbulent personal history behind her, Polly has been in and out of London's workhouses, where the destitute are offered food and shelter in return for unskilled work, for over five years, ever since her husband ceased maintenance payments on the grounds that his wife has been working as a prostitute.

Despite finding a job working as a domestic servant during the spring of 1888, Nichols resumes her itinerant lifestyle and lives in a series of workhouses and lodging houses over the summer. On 31 August 1888, Polly has made her daily lodgings money three times over but has drunk away most of her profits, so she must go out to work again if she is to have a roof over her head for the night. She is last seen in The Frying Pan public house before heading out into the night again – minutes later her body is discovered on Buck's Row. Her throat has been cut and her abdomen slashed open. It will later be discovered in the mortuary that Polly Nichols' body has been eviscerated too.

> The East End, the Ripper's hunting ground, was notorious for extreme poverty, violence and crime

Even before the Ripper's reign of terror, the East End was a hotbed of violence, particularly toward women. While the police will later exclude them from the so-called canonical murders – the five murders considered to have been perpetrated by the Ripper – two women working as prostitutes have already been killed in 1888. Emma Smith and Martha Tabram were both violently murdered and mutilated that year, but with such events relatively commonplace there is little concern among the capital's police force. This will soon change.

GEORGE
YARD



A *Punch* cartoon pokes fun at the police's attempts to catch the Ripper

A burly, mustachioed man, Frederick Abberline knows the streets of Whitechapel well, having worked in the Metropolitan Police force's H Division as a local inspector for almost ten years before receiving a promotion to inspector first-class at Scotland Yard in February 1888. With the resources of H Division seen as stretched and the seriousness of the Nichols murder recognised at the highest levels, Abberline is seconded back to Whitechapel to oversee the investigation into the murders due to his excellent knowledge of the area's geography, criminals and way of life. Nobody doubts Abberline's suitability for the job – he is considered fair and meticulous. With increasing numbers of detectives and divisions involved in investigating the murders, Abberline becomes the most-recognised policeman connected to the Ripper murders, conducting interviews, viewing identity parades and hearing testimonies first-hand. Many high-ranking officials from Scotland Yard would compile their own theories based on Abberline's reports.

However, the police have a difficult task on their hands. The victims' profession is an unwitting assistance to the Ripper. They lead him to the shadows, where they are unlikely to be disturbed: the perfect way to commit murder in Whitechapel. With an estimated 90,000 people crammed into little more than 2.6 square kilometres (1.5 square miles) – and an estimated 1,200 women working as prostitutes at any one time – policing Whitechapel is near-impossible. This is made even harder by Victorian methods of policing, which dictate that beat constables must check in on their rounds on time or face their pay being docked: a quixotic rule that leads to some constables turning a blind eye to crime in order to check in on time. By 19 September, Abberline is forced to conclude that, "not the slightest clue can at present be obtained", as to Nichols' killer.

Just a week after the murder of Nichols, the Ripper strikes again. On 8 September 1888, the body of Annie Chapman is discovered in the yard of 29 Hanbury Street. Her throat has been cut, but the mutilations are even more horrific. Chapman's body has been disembowelled and the intestines strung over her shoulder; part of Chapman's womb has been removed. Alongside Chapman's meagre possessions there is a leather apron found nearby.

The murders took place in the early hours of the morning on weekends, leading some to believe the killer worked a day job

Newspapers quickly latch on to the two murders and the leather apron is seen as vital evidence by the press. A man colloquially known as 'Leather Apron,' John Pizer, is reported to have been seen with Chapman shortly before her murder. Pizer had previously attacked a man with a knife and sexually assaulted a prostitute the previous summer, which doesn't help his cause. Just as importantly – given the rampant suspicion of Jews in the East End – Pizer is Jewish, spurring the press on to hysterical anti-Semitism. *The East London Observer* describes Pizer as having a face "not altogether pleasant to look upon, by reason of the grizzly black strips of hair" and possessing "thin lips" with "a cruel sardonic kind of look". However, Pizer is quickly discounted as a suspect when it is discovered he has an alibi for both murders.

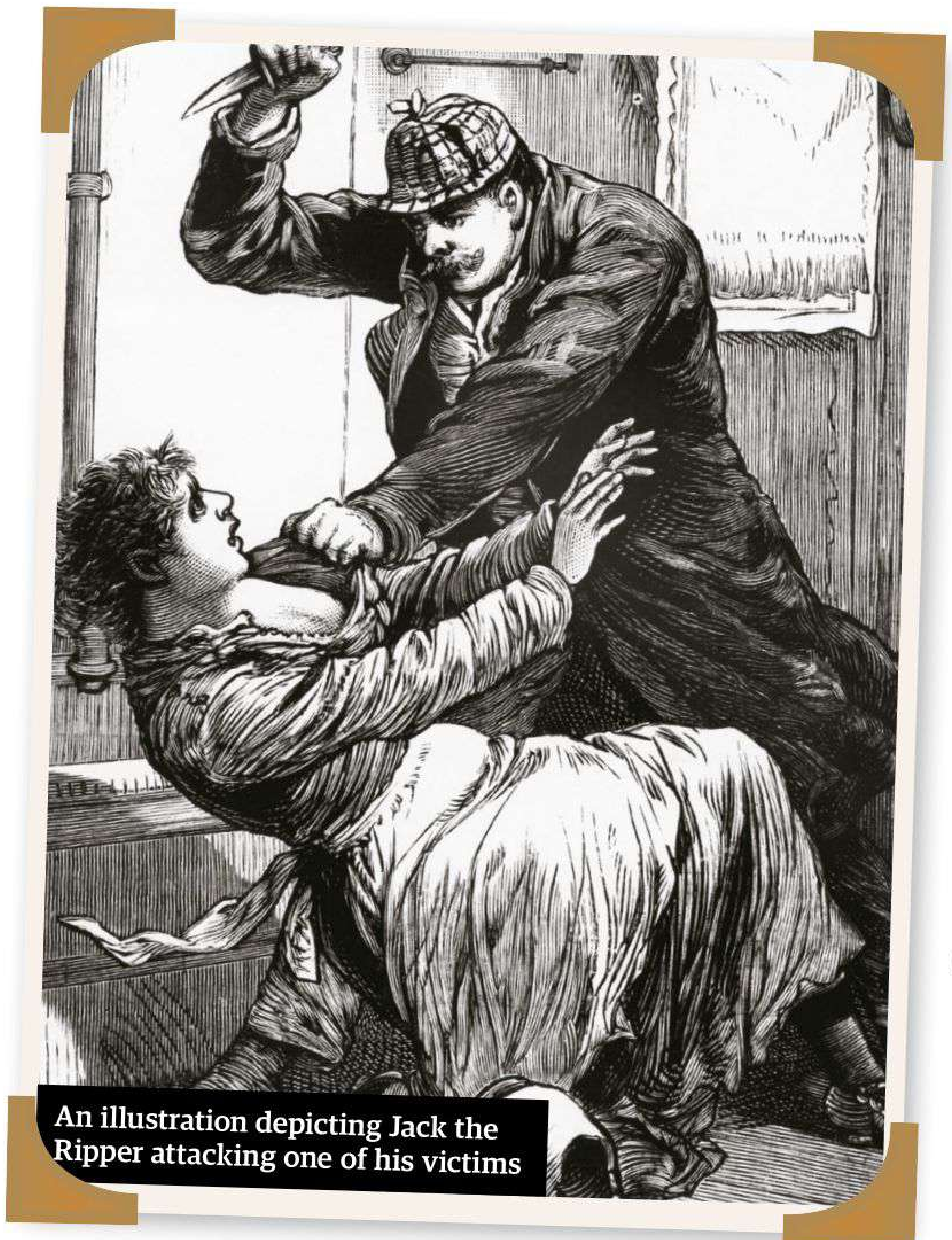
Over the course of the investigation, more than 2,000 people are interviewed in connection to the murders, with a focus on slaughtermen, butchers and those in the medical profession, due to the initial belief that the murderer must have some anatomical knowledge. With thousands of accusations every week, Abberline and H Division is stretched to breaking point. Public dissatisfaction with the investigation leads to the formation of a vigilante group, The Whitechapel Vigilance Committee. Frustrated with the police's performance, the committee starts its own patrols, paying men a small wage to patrol the streets from midnight to the early hours of the morning.

Without some of the most basic forensic science that crime-fighters will take for granted in the 20th century Abberline struggles to make any headway. The policeman would walk the streets until the early hours searching for clues and would often give unfortunates fourpence for a night's doss to get them off the streets. At one point H Division has 1,600 reports to wade through and the strain on Abberline nearly breaks him.

The police are deluged with letters – most of them overwhelmingly certain fakes – and information they do not trust. However, physical profiles built from claimed witness reports, in contradiction to the romanticised image of the Ripper, suggest a white man in his twenties or thirties with a moustache and dressed shabbily or as a tradesman or sailor. A criminal profile by police surgeon Dr Thomas Bond suggests a quiet, eccentric man without anatomical knowledge and driven by sexual mania to kill: "The murderer must have been a man of physical strength and of great coolness and daring. There is no evidence that he had an accomplice. He must in my opinion be a man subject to periodical attacks of homicidal and erotic mania. The character of the mutilations indicate that the man may be in a condition sexually, that may be called satyriasis."

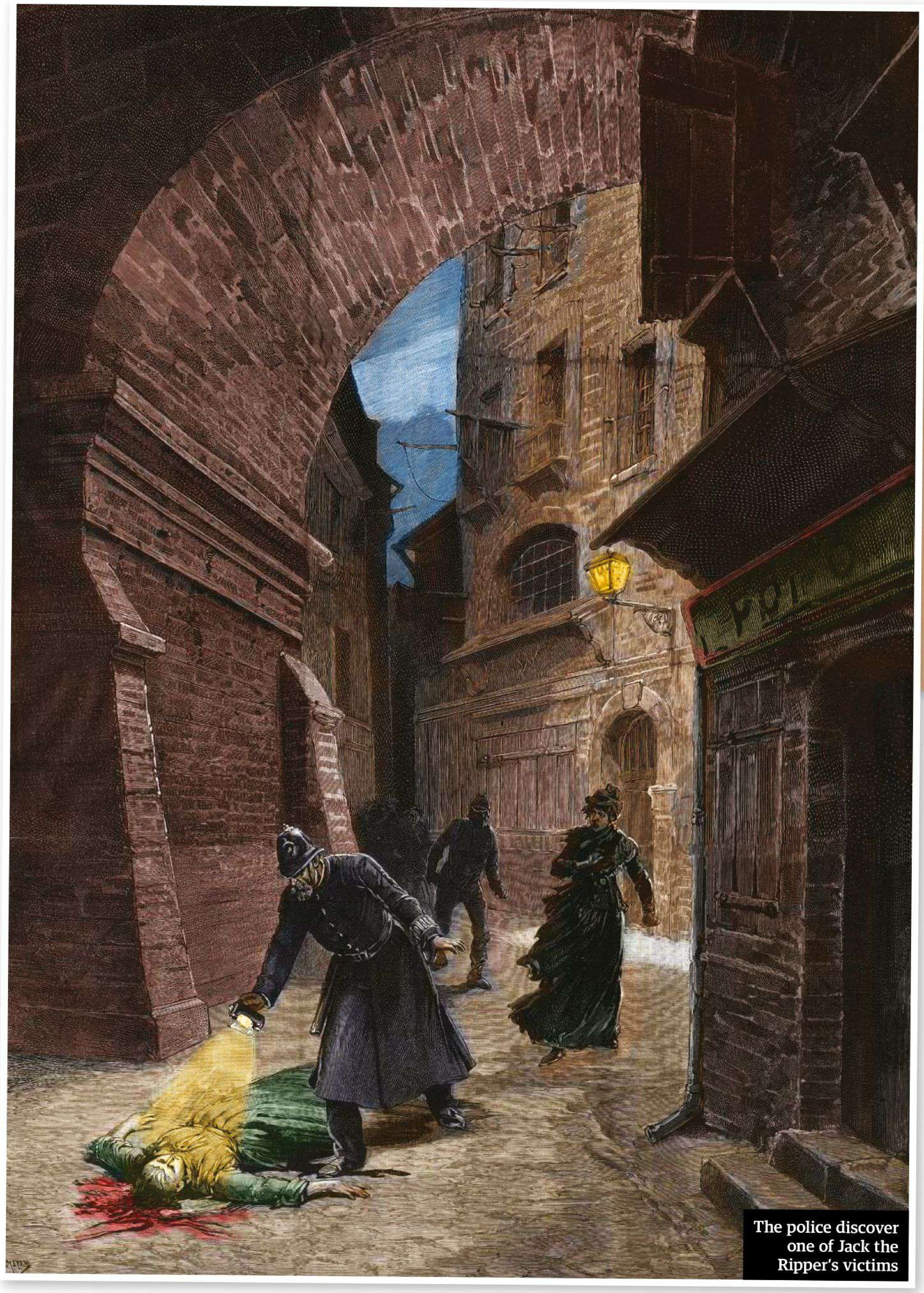
Victorians make much of sexual dysfunction and many who end up in lunatic asylums are committed there for activities that would not raise an eyebrow today. Nevertheless, while Ripper victims show no signs of sexual assault, most believe that there is a sexual element to the murders, given the way the corpses are posed and the genital mutilations that most display. Abberline is suspicious of Jacob Isenschmid and at one point declares him to be the most likely suspect, not a great leap, as he is given to bouts of insanity and is known as the 'Mad Pork Butcher.' He is arrested on 12 September and subsequently committed to the Bow, an infirmary asylum. Several weeks pass following Chapman's death and the hysteria following her death begins to die down. The East End allows itself to hope that the worst has passed before it is struck with a horrific double killing in the early hours of 30 September.

Like Nichols and Chapman, Liz Stride has worked as a prostitute but had previously run a coffee house with her husband, who had died in 1884. At that time, Stride is working as a charlady and making some money sewing, while occasionally receiving money from her on-off partner, Michael Kidney. Days before her murder, Dr Thomas Barnardo claims to have seen



An illustration depicting Jack the Ripper attacking one of his victims

"Even before the Ripper's reign of terror, the East End was a hotbed of violence, particularly toward women"



The police discover one of Jack the Ripper's victims

Stride in a lodging house in Whitechapel among a group of women who opine that they might soon be murdered by the Ripper.

Stride is found with her throat cut in Berner Street on 30 September. Of the canonical five, Stride's murder is considered the most dubious due to the lack of trademark mutilations, leading to speculation that the murderer is interrupted shortly after killing Stride, or even that her murder is committed by someone other than the Ripper, perhaps a would-be copycat. This theory is given further credence when the body of Cathy Eddowes is discovered in Mitre Square 45 minutes later.

The killing of Stride is significant in that it features one of the most convincing eyewitness descriptions, given by a man named Israel Schwartz. His account suggests that he saw the Ripper attack Stride before becoming aware that he was observed, shouting "Lipski!" before Schwartz escapes. The police suggest the colloquial term, used to refer to Jews, is essayed to an accomplice nearby, who makes it towards Schwartz himself. This theory leads the police to initially conclude that their suspects are Jewish. However, Abberline is of the opinion that the term is aimed in a derogatory manner at Schwartz, given his Yiddish features. Such is Abberline's standing in the investigation that this take is adopted without question, discounting the theory that the Ripper was Jewish and working with Jewish accomplices.

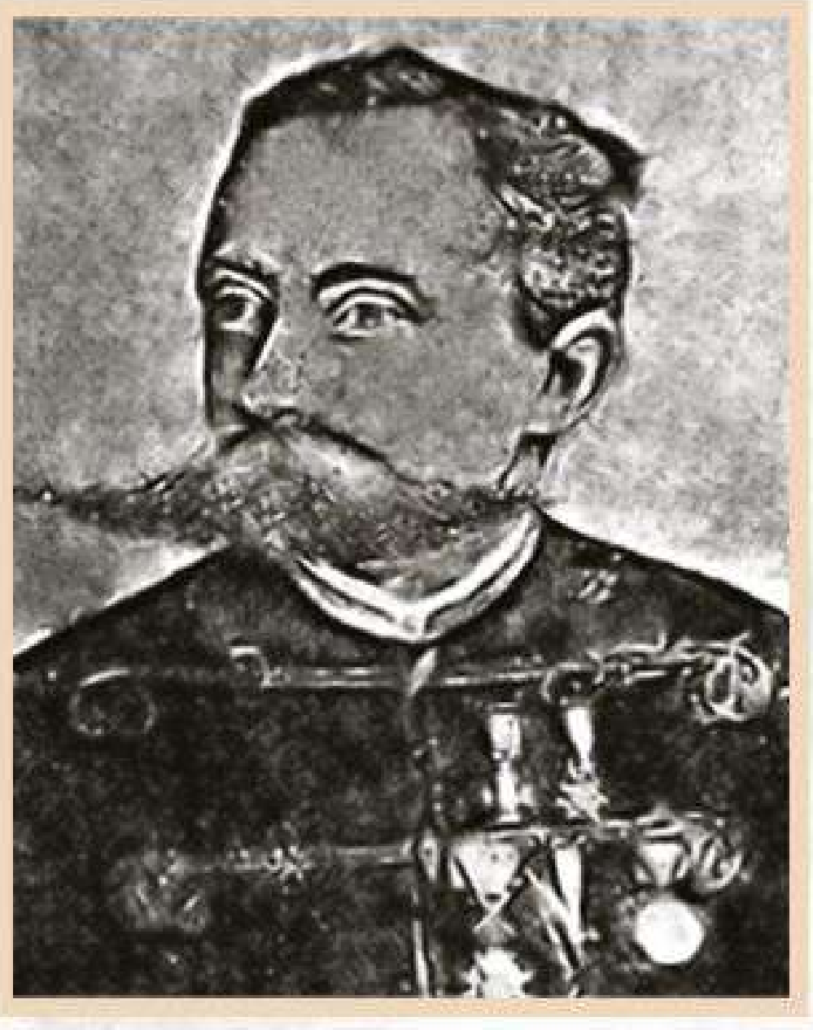
Eddowes is not known to work routinely as a prostitute and is in a relationship at the time of her death. She is given to heavy drinking, however, and on the night of her death is taken to Bishopsgate Police Station and locked in a cell until sober. At around 1am, she is released and turns to walk in the opposite direction to her lodging house - in less than an hour she will be dead. Unlike Stride, Eddowes' body has been horrifically mutilated. Having cut

Suspects

Francis Tumblety

Profession: Herbalist, con man

Was he the Ripper?:

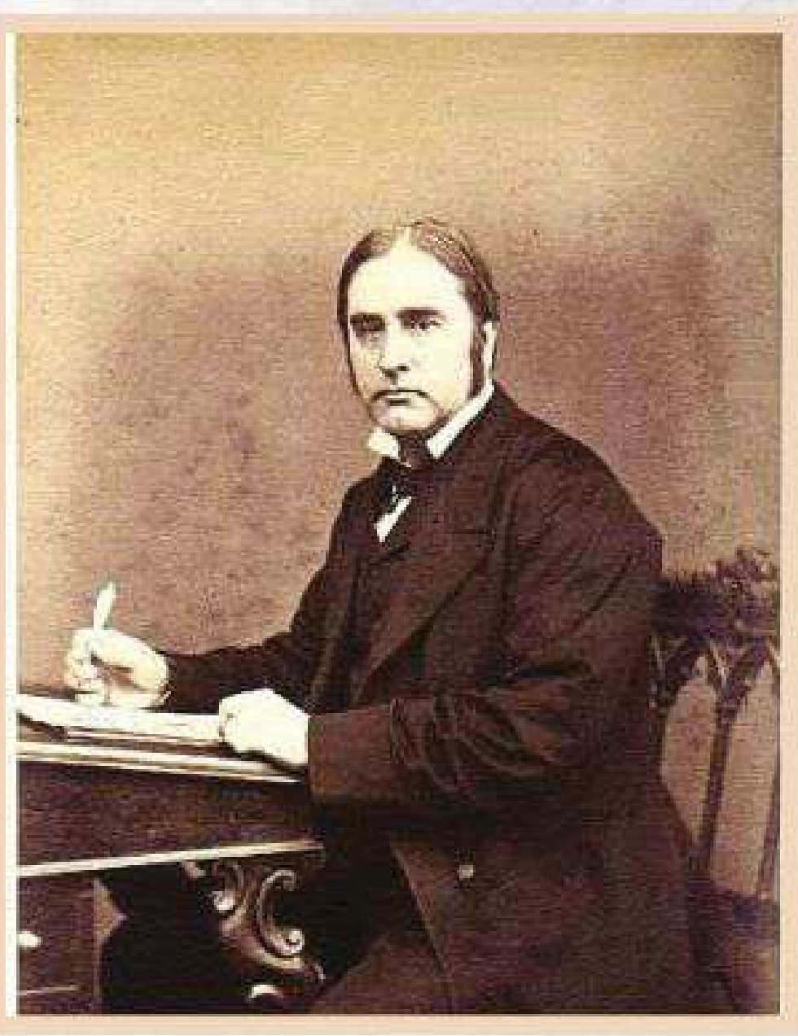


An American quack doctor, Tumblety supposedly owned sets of reproductive organs in jars and was thought to be flamboyant - and thus homosexual. While such scant evidence was sufficient for Ripper accusations in the 19th century, Tumblety's extreme misogyny and criminal behaviour led to one investigating officer naming him as his favoured suspect, while a forensic analyst deemed his handwriting bore a similarity to the Ripper letters.

Sir William Gull

Profession: Doctor, Queen's physician

Was he the Ripper?:

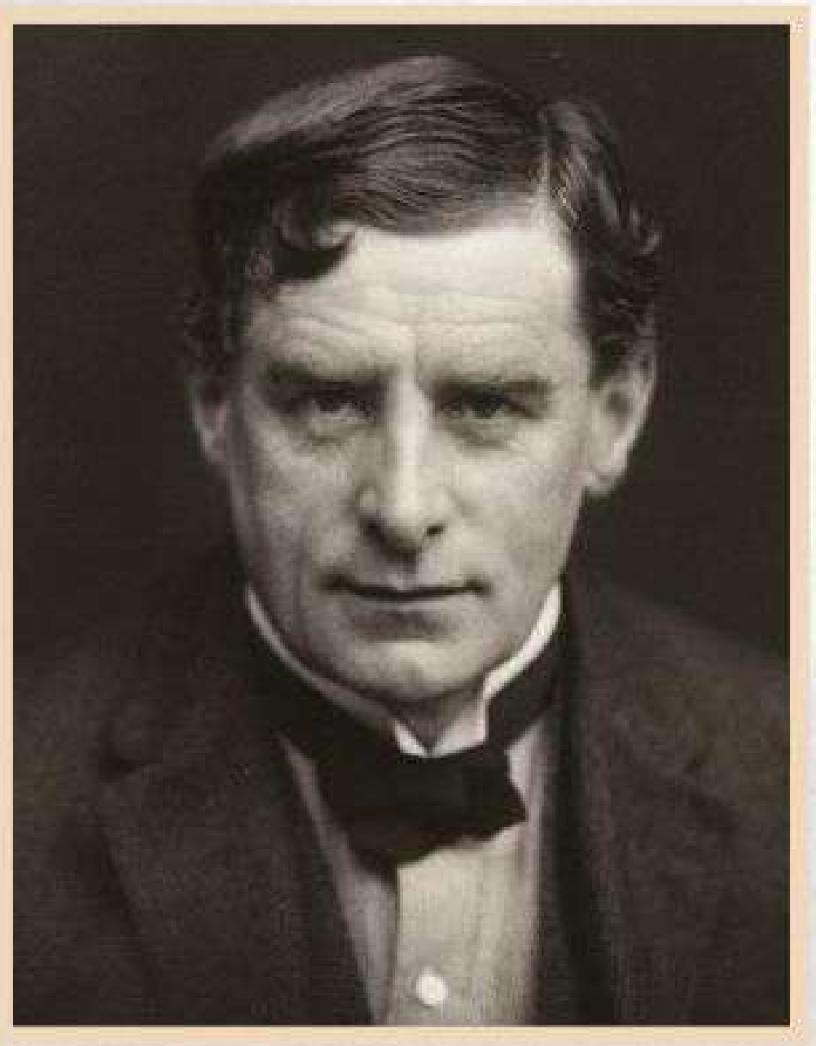


Alan Moore's seminal graphic novel *From Hell* suggests that Gull was the Ripper, wiping out a group of women who learned of an illegitimate Catholic heir to the throne fathered by Prince Albert Victor. The Queen's surgeon, most famously played by Ian Holm in a film adaptation, is portrayed either as a diligent professional, thoroughly insane or acting as an agent of higher powers, both corporeal and divine. None are taken seriously.

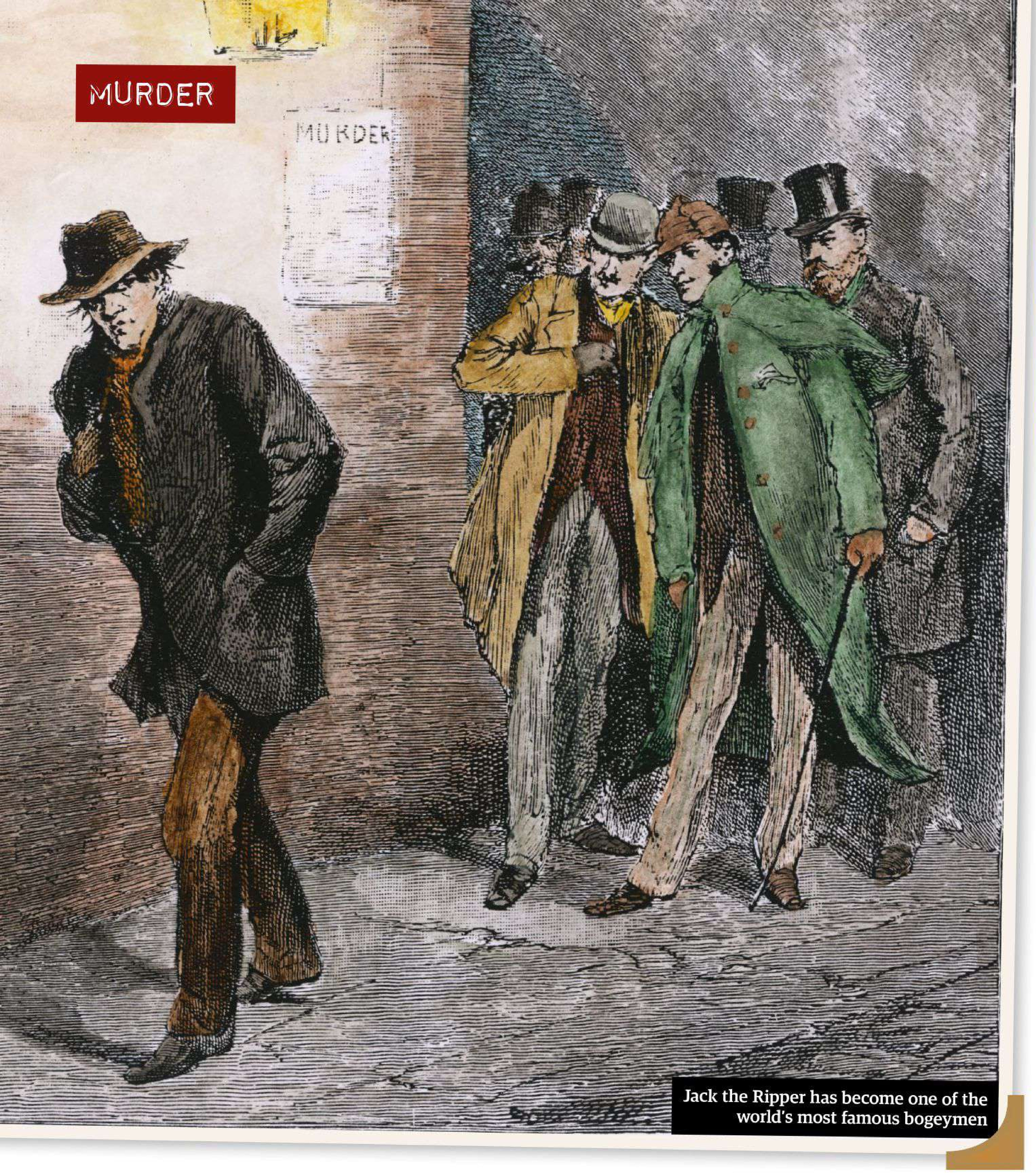
Walter Sickert

Profession: Artist

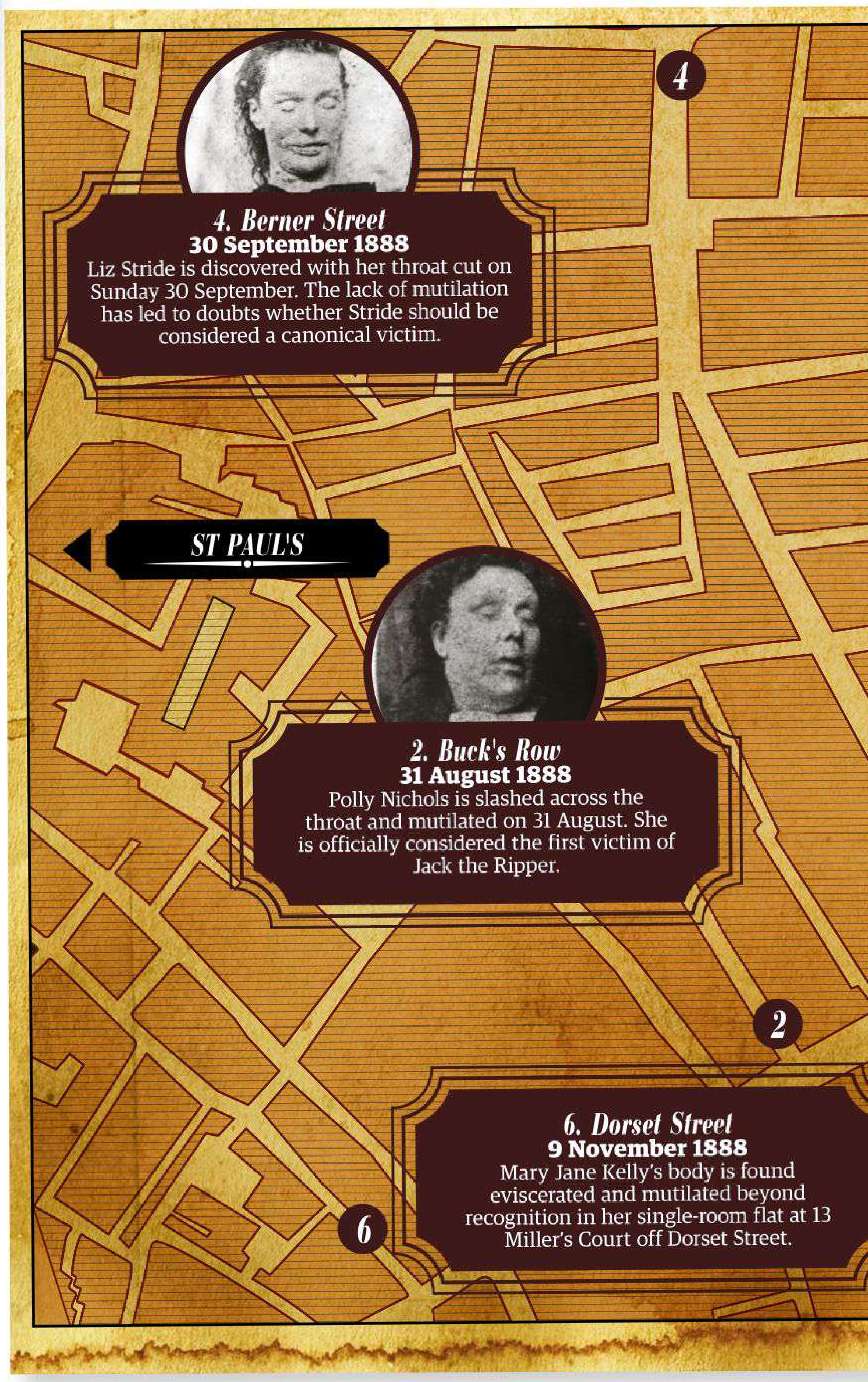
Was he the Ripper?:



Famed for his avant-garde paintings, Sickert was open about his interest in Ripperology. After his death, Sickert was accused of being an accomplice - or even committing the murders himself - in various books, including one by crime novelist Patricia Cornwell, who claims to have matched Sickert's DNA to one of the Ripper letters. The theory is widely dismissed.



Jack the Ripper has become one of the world's most famous bogeymen



4. Berner Street
30 September 1888
Liz Stride is discovered with her throat cut on Sunday 30 September. The lack of mutilation has led to doubts whether Stride should be considered a canonical victim.

2. Buck's Row
31 August 1888
Polly Nichols is slashed across the throat and mutilated on 31 August. She is officially considered the first victim of Jack the Ripper.

6. Dorset Street
9 November 1888
Mary Jane Kelly's body is found eviscerated and mutilated beyond recognition in her single-room flat at 13 Miller's Court off Dorset Street.

her throat, the killer also disembowels his victim, removing part of her kidneys and uterus. The corpse's eyes have also been removed, as well as the tip of her nose and an earlobe.

The removal of the kidney is significant. Scotland Yard and H Division are deluged with thousands of letters a week from the public, pointing the finger at possible suspects. What's more, the press claim that a number of letters, purporting to be from the Ripper, have been sent to their offices. Of these letters, only one is believed to be potentially genuine. Sent to George Lusk, head of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, two weeks later, it contains a piece of kidney that is purportedly from Eddowes' body. The letter is thought to be significant as the kidney is reported to show signs of Bright's Disease, which Eddowes is known to have suffered from. The writer of the letter – marked as being written 'From Hell' – claims to have eaten the missing kidney half and threatens to send Lusk the bloody knife used in the murder.

Jack the Ripper is believed to have been left-handed but there is no evidence to confirm this

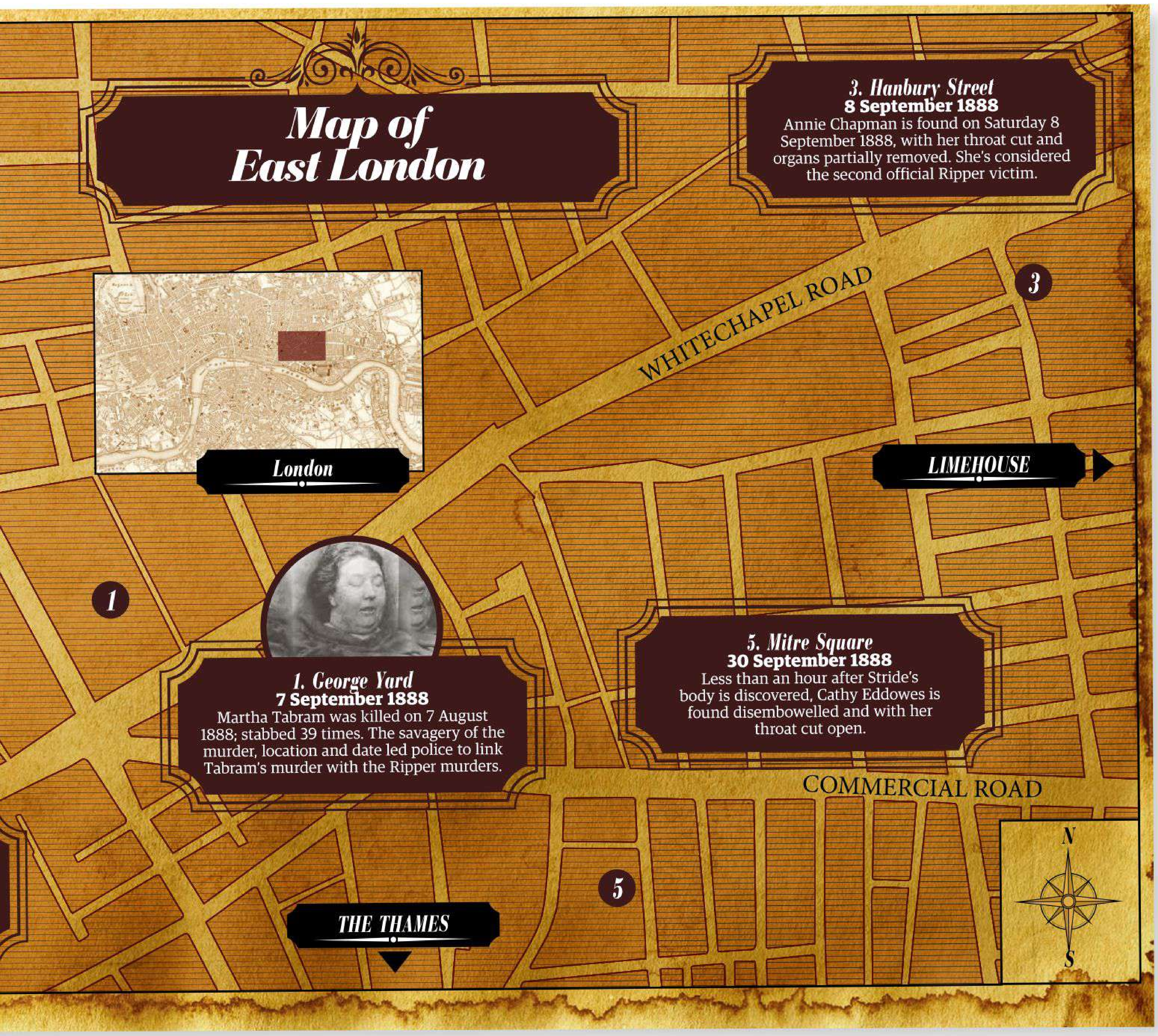
Of the many letters received by police, only two others are given any credence. The first is sent to the *Central News Agency* on 25 September and begins with 'Dear Boss' and is signed 'Jack The Ripper,' the first use of this moniker. It goes on to threaten to send the police the ears of the next victim, but while Eddowes' ear has been cut, the pathologist suggests this was coincidental to the Ripper slashing her throat.

The next, received on 1 October, is signed 'Saucy Jacky' and references the 'double event' of the murders of Stride and Eddowes. Although initially given credence due to the apparent foretelling of the murders, the postcard is actually postmarked after the event. Both are widely thought to be hoaxes written after the event, with police even suspecting unscrupulous journalists keen to keep the story alive. The police put constables into plain clothes to blend in with Whitechapel's locals and copies of the letters purporting to be from the Ripper are posted throughout the area in the vain hope that someone will recognise the handwriting in them.

However, Abberline has another problem – the climate of fear and hysteria breeds xenophobia, which finds an outlet in persecution of the local Jewish population. Near to where Eddowes was found is a message scrawled on a wall, implying Jews are responsible for the murders. Five weeks pass without another murder, with an increased police presence and public vigilance at a high.

Mary Jane Kelly, unlike the other murder victims who were all in their forties, is 25 years old and rents a private room. She works as a prostitute and has a fondness for drink, having ended up in London by way of Ireland and Wales, according to various reports. On the morning of 9 November, Kelly's landlord dispatches a lackey to collect the six weeks of rent she owes. He finds only Kelly's body, horribly eviscerated beyond recognition in her flat. Over the fire is a kettle, the solder on which has melted. Abberline surmises that the killer burned Kelly's clothes – which are missing – to provide light in which to carry out his macabre work. The mutilation is so extensive that Dr Bond believes the murderer would have been at work for at least two hours. Kelly's organs have been removed from her chest and abdominal cavities, her face destroyed and heart missing.

The brutality of the killing reignites fear across Whitechapel, so Scotland Yard announces a pardon for anyone with information leading to the arrest of the Ripper. However, at the height of his notoriety, the Ripper disappears. Just as quickly as his reign of terror on the East End began, it ends. While there are superficially similar murders in 1889 and 1891, it



Map of East London

3. Hanbury Street
8 September 1888
Annie Chapman is found on Saturday 8 September 1888, with her throat cut and organs partially removed. She's considered the second official Ripper victim.

1. George Yard
7 September 1888
Martha Tabram was killed on 7 August 1888; stabbed 39 times. The savagery of the murder, location and date led police to link Tabram's murder with the Ripper murders.

5. Mitre Square
30 September 1888
Less than an hour after Stride's body is discovered, Cathy Eddowes is found disembowelled and with her throat cut open.

Jack's victims?

Martha Tabram

Separated from her husband and with a reputation for excessive drinking, Martha Tabram was destitute by August 1888 and making a living from prostitution. Her body was discovered with 39 stab wounds but she had not been further mutilated. Tabram is not generally considered an official 'canonical' victim of the Ripper.

Polly Nichols

Estranged from her husband and children, Polly Nichols had been in and out of workhouses for over five years by the time of her death. She had earned enough money for a bed on the night of her murder but spent the money on alcohol, forcing her back onto the streets.

Annie Chapman

Known as Dark Annie due to either her hair or her black moods, 47-year-old Chapman had fallen on hard times following the death of her husband, birth of a handicapped child and the death of another. Although she had previously sold flowers and relied on an allowance from her husband, his death forced her into prostitution to support herself financially.

Liz Stride

Known as Long Liz, possibly due to her surname or appearance, Stride was a Swedish immigrant given to flights of fancy and worked as a prostitute on the streets of Whitechapel. Some Ripperologists question whether Stride was a Ripper victim as her body was not mutilated; others suggest that the killer was interrupted in the act.

Cathy Eddowes

The second victim in the so-called 'double event' on 30 September, the 46-year-old Eddowes was known as an intelligent, striking and jolly woman who had moved to London from Wolverhampton. There's some doubt as to whether Eddowes worked as a prostitute, though she was seen talking to a stranger minutes before her death.

Mary Jane Kelly

The last of the canonical murders, Kelly did not quite fit the established profile. While working as a prostitute, Kelly had her own lodgings and, at 25, was much younger than the other victims. Her murder was by far the most brutal, resulting in her body being removed not by stretcher, but in eight buckets.

> "The writer of the letter – marked as being written 'From Hell' – claims to have eaten the missing kidney half"

is not believed the same man committed them. The investigation slowly winds down but the Ripper lives on in the public's consciousness. The Whitechapel murders have also galvanised politicians into acting to improve the state of the East End's slums, many of which are cleared over the following decades. Abberline moves back to Scotland Yard, receives a promotion to the rank of chief inspector and retires in 1892.

While opinion of the identity of the Ripper may be divided, most experts believe that only incarceration, removal from Whitechapel or death would have prevented the Ripper from killing again; having been forced to kill from some sort of compulsion he would have been unable to resist had he remained in the area and at liberty. In 1894 Metropolitan Police Chief Constable Melville Macnaghten publishes a report that names three suspects - John Druitt, Aaron Kosminski and Michael Ostrog - as three likely candidates. However, factual inaccuracies blight the report, while Ostrog was likely imprisoned in France at the time of the murders. Macnaghten's report is indicative of the lack of sound factual bases behind many Ripper accusations.

As for the man in charge of the investigation at the time, Abberline's favoured candidate was Seweryn Antonowicz Kłosowski, also known as George Chapman, a Polish immigrant hanged in 1903 for murdering three of his mistresses. Chapman worked as butcher, was known to be paranoid and to carry a knife, lived near the location of the first murder, matched physical profiles from witness statements and hated women. "I cannot help feeling that this is the man we struggled so hard to capture 15 years ago," said the Ripper hunter in an interview conducted in 1903 with the *Pall Mall Gazette.*

Abberline pointed out that the date of Chapman's arrival in England coincided with the beginning of the murders and that they ceased when he left for the USA, where Chapman was later tried and hanged for murdering his mistresses. Chapman had also studied medicine and surgery in Russia - leading Abberline to state that some of the Ripper murders constituted the work of an expert surgeon. The inspector also recalled a story in which a wealthy American gentleman had offered to pay a sub-curator at a pathology museum for organs - perhaps connecting this anecdote with evidence that the Ripper had removed several organs from his victims. "It seems beyond belief that such inhuman wickedness could enter into the mind of any man," said Abberline of his theory. However, the retired policeman admitted that 15 years later, Scotland Yard was none the wiser as to the Ripper's identity. The same can be said over 125 years later; Jack the Ripper is an enduring mystery whose identity seems destined never to be revealed.

© Corbis; Alamy; Thinkstock

Elizabeth Báthory

The story of how one of history's most reviled figures terrorised the Kingdom of Hungary

As the cold midwinter of 1610 seeped through the stone of Čachtice Castle in Hungary, screams could be heard coming from within. The 50-year-old widow, Countess Elizabeth Báthory, was indulging in some entertainment. At her feet lay a young serving girl who was being burned with red-hot irons. She would not survive.

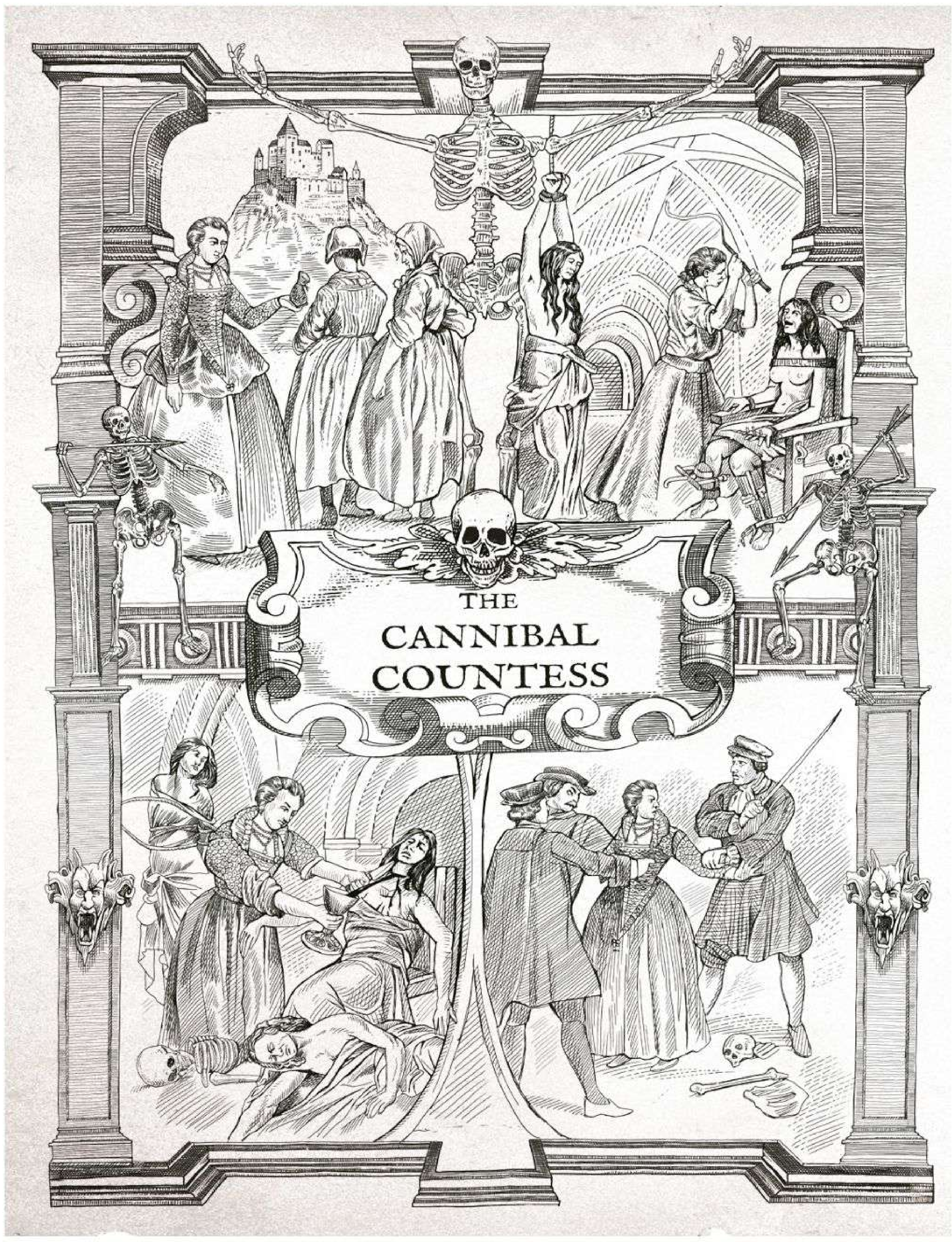
The Countess, who would come to be known as the most prolific female killer in history, seems to have found pleasure in inflicting pain and misery on her servants, serfs, and anyone who crossed her. Over the years these tales of torture grew so monstrous that she was thought to have bathed in the blood of virgins, a pastime that granted her eternal youth. Like the fictional character Dracula, with whom she is often compared, she is seen as a monster and someone who inflicts pain on others for personal pleasure. Over centuries of folklore and embellishment, fact and fiction has become muddled with the number of her victims cited as high as 650.

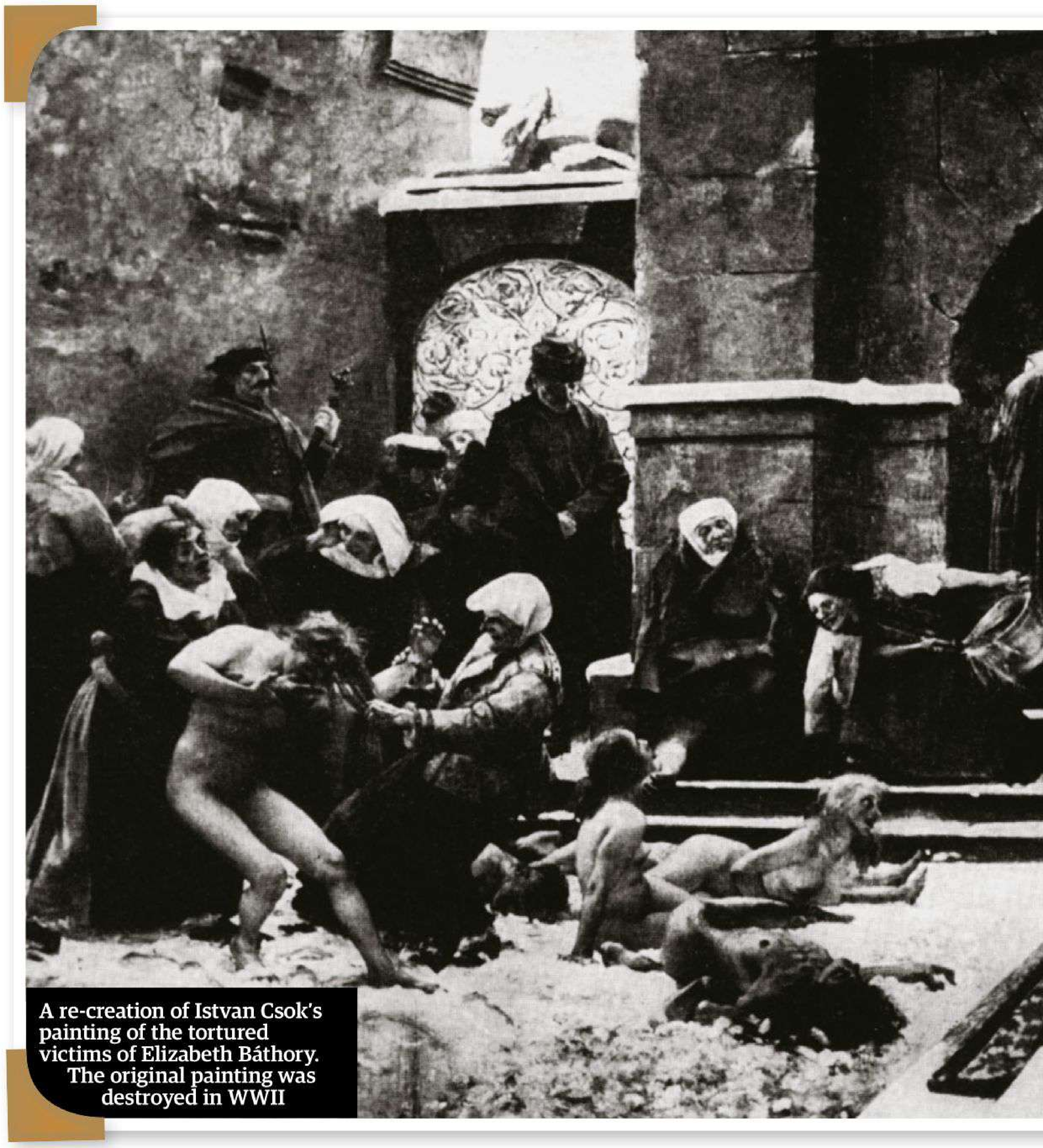
The Kingdom of Hungary, where Báthory hailed from, looked much different in the late-16th and early-17th centuries than it does now. The southern half was claimed by the Ottoman Empire and offered them a potential gateway into Europe. Opposing this in the north were the various wealthy nobles who, in spite of perceived religious intolerance, were as distrustful of each other as they were of the Turks.

Elizabeth, as she is known by her anglicised name, was born to Baron Thurzó Báthory and Baroness Anna Báthory. Although they hailed from two separate branches of the family – Thurzó from the Ecsed and Anna from the Somlyó – their lineage can be traced back to nobles who aided Vlad the Impaler in his attempts to seize the Wallachian throne. An ominous connection. As her father was a Voivode of Transylvania, it gave him exclusive administrative, judicial and military powers within that subset of the Kingdom of Hungary.

This means that as soon as Báthory was born, she already had an advantage over a significant portion of the Hungarian population. As part of the landed elite, she was schooled in Latin, German and Greek, and her family's wealth meant that she would not want for anything in her early life.

Her wedding to Ferenc Nádasdy, whose family – like the Báthorys – was one of the more wealthy families in Hungary, was attended by over 4,500 guests. They were betrothed when she was around 11 years old, but she was rumoured to have carried a peasant's love child a few years later. A report tells of the child being ripped apart by dogs. As with many aspects of Báthory's life, the truth is hard to pin down. As the social standing of her family was above her husband's coming into the





A re-creation of Istvan Csok's painting of the tortured victims of Elizabeth Báthory. The original painting was destroyed in WWII

"It is in her husband's absence that Báthory is thought to have started to indulge in her sadistic tendencies"

marriage, she had refused to change her last name, remaining a Báthory. Her independence is clearly spelt out in a letter she wrote to Lord Bánffy, a fellow Hungarian noble:

"I know well, Lord Bánffy, that this is only the new poverty, that you would be watching my small estate and do this… but yet know you this, that I will not allow myself to be dominated by men for long."

Báthory's early life gives no indication to the horrible accusations that would find her in later life. The couple had five or six children, depending on which records can be trusted, although some did not make it past infancy. Her husband fought in the Ottoman-Hungarian wars and it is in his absence that Báthory is thought to have started to indulge in her sadistic tendencies. Tales of flagellation, branding irons and sewing one unfortunate girl's mouth shut because she talked too much would all be rumours that abounded while Nádasdy was absent.

While some reports link her with the deaths of 650 young women, Elizabeth was only officially charged with 80 murders

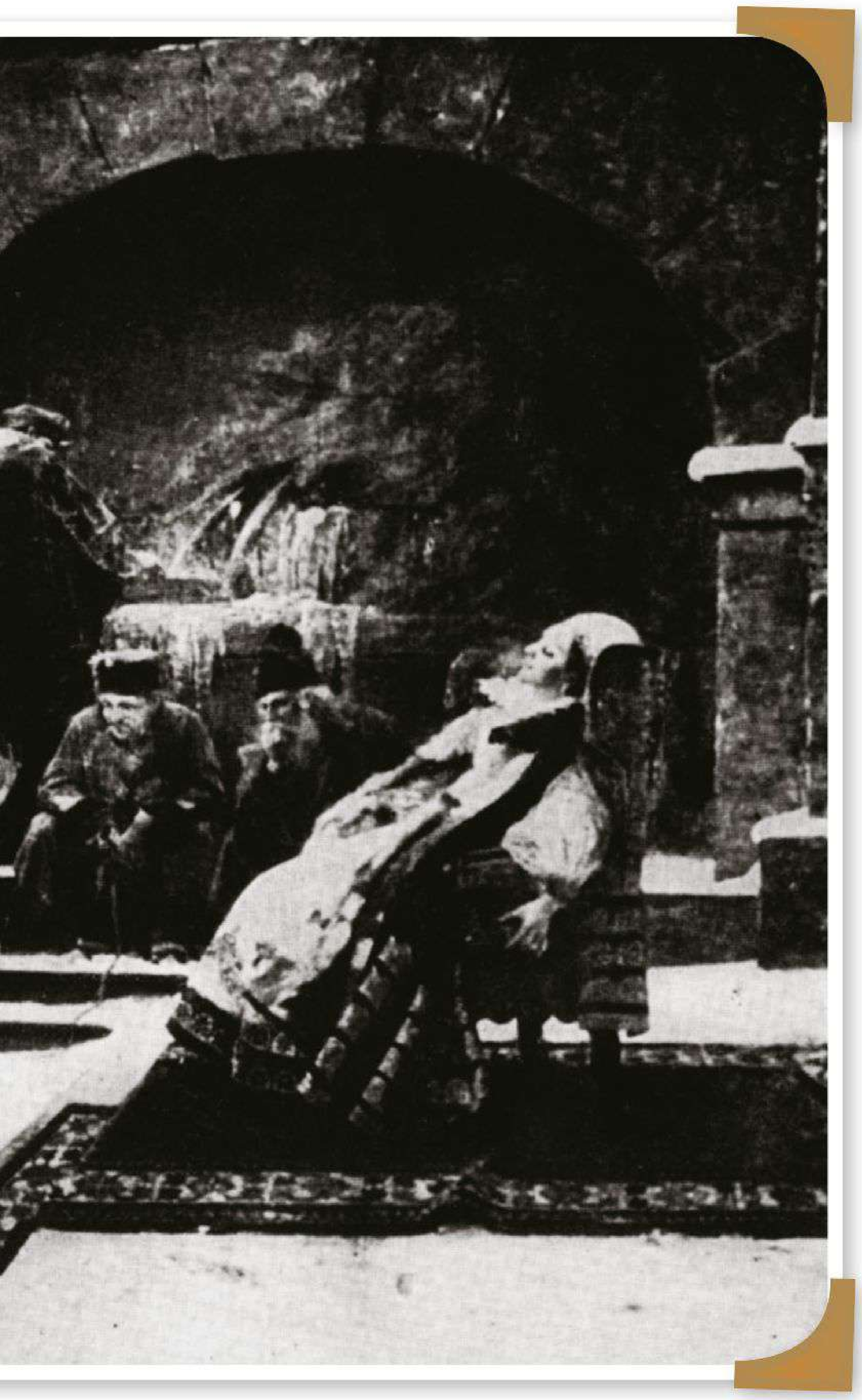
This life was not to last however, as Nádasdy fell ill to a mysterious malady and died in 1604. This sudden death meant that Elizabeth found herself the owner of a string of estates that stretched over all of greater Hungary in places like Vienna, Beckov and Nyírbátor. Properties like Čachtice Castle, situated in the Carpathian mountains, and the surrounding villages is where she would choose to make her home, both during and after her husband's lifetime. These lands gave her already great wealth such a boost that she became the richest, most powerful and desirable countess in the land.

With the death of her husband, Báthory surrounded herself with courtiers and servants, who would later be accused of the same crimes as their mistress. They were made up of older women and a crippled boy. These women, Anna, Ilona Jó, Dorottya, Katalin, and the boy Ficzkó, were an assortment of wet nurses, washerwomen and friends. Not a stereotypical band of torturers.

It is from their testimonies that we learn of some of Báthory's wilder behaviours, like biting chunks of flesh out of women, sometimes without even leaving the comfort of her bed. There was also talk that Elizabeth beat her servants with cudgels, whips, needles and red-hot irons. The abuse was not always so active, however, as some girls were doused with cold water and left outside to freeze to death. These unfortunate victims seem to have been predominantly castle servants, but also consisted of young, gentrified girls who were sent to the Báthory estate to learn courtly etiquette.

Without the steady stream of plunder from her husband's military campaigns, the Báthory estate was beginning to run low on funds. The King owed an enormous debt to her late husband and Elizabeth made frequent trips to the royal treasury, attempting to have this coin repaid.

These acts were said to have gone on until 1610 when the bloody accusations could no longer be ignored. It was decided that the Palatine of Hungary, Count György Thurzó, would investigate these disturbances. A Palatine was a high-level official in the kingdom, a remnant of the bygone Roman



era, and was second only to the king in power. Thurzó, with his military background and political experience, was seen as the best man for the job.

Arriving at Báthory's estate, he claims in his personal account to have found the dead body of a young woman, and another whose mortal wounds were plainly caused by torture. More women were also found imprisoned and seemed to be waiting to meet the same fate. He wrote in his letter:

"When my men entered Csejthe Manor, they found a girl dead in the house; another followed in death as a result of many wounds and agonies. In addition to this, there was also a wounded and tortured woman there; the other victims were kept hidden away..."

Thurzó did not catch Báthory in the act of torturing these women; it was a later embellishment to the story. What Thurzó does provide is an eyewitness account of Báthory seemingly engaged in the torture and murder of servant girls at her place of residence. It's not quite bathing in virgin's blood, but damning none the less.

Báthory and her accomplices were then arrested as officials began their investigation. Under torture, her accomplices admitted that they were complicit in a number of atrocities committed over the years and other witnesses spoke of seeing seemingly hundreds of young women tortured and killed. Her servant Ilona Jó gave this account: "She pricked the girls through their fingers with pins and said, 'If it hurts the whore, then she can pull it out,' if she did so, the Lady would beat her again and cut off the finger."

With the necessary information extracted, her accomplices were executed a week later. Another witness testimony brought Báthory's crimes to the attention of the court:

"The second witness was the honourable Tamás Jaworka, Judge of the City of Kosztolány, about 40 years old, sworn and interrogated; he spoke of the cruelty of the woman Elizabeth Báthory... and said, in addition, that he had heard from some young servants of the said Lady... how extremely cruel this woman was with her maids; namely, that she burned some of them on the abdomen with a red-hot iron; others she seated in a large, earthen tank and poured boiling water over them and scalded the skin, in this way causing them to suffer; the same witness had also frequently seen the appearances of the virgins in her retinue disfigured and covered with blue spots from numerous blows..."

Báthory was never able to defend herself or her actions, being turned down to represent herself in the trial. Thurzó used his connections with the King to impose perpetuis carceribus (life imprisonment) rather than the death penalty. And so Báthory was condemned to live the rest of her life imprisoned in

Elizabeth died at the age of 54 after spending four years in solitary confinement in Čachtice Castle

The bloody countess

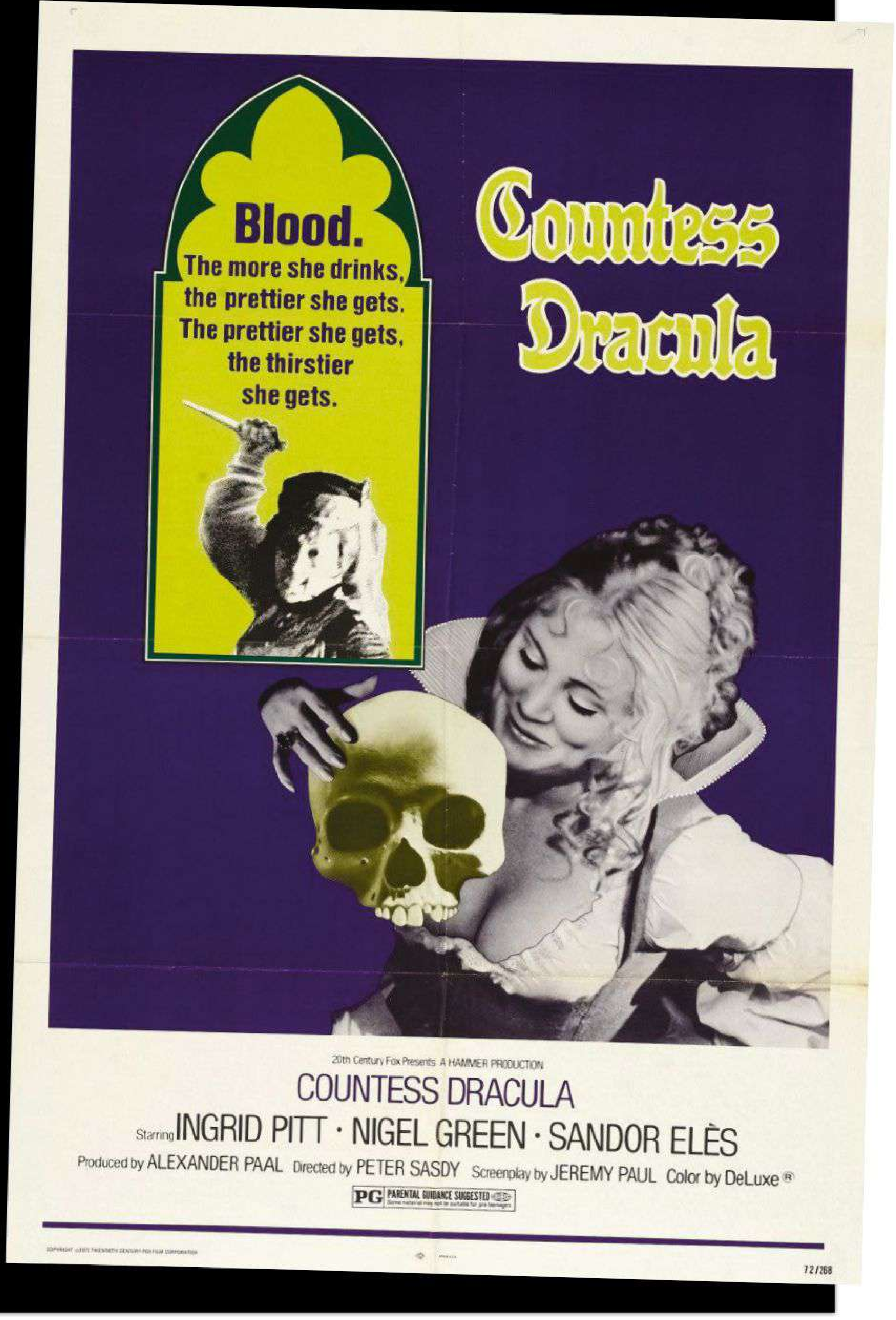
Elizabeth Báthory's fame does not come just from her family name, riches or power, but rather from the dark and twisted tales that have attached themselves to her over the years. Bathing in the blood of virgins is a tall tale, but is it really true? As it stands there is no contemporary evidence that Báthory bathed in blood or that its power gave her eternal youth.

During her lifetime she was usually referred to as 'the Infamous lady' and it would not be until around 200 years later, when the origin of the vampire was starting to take shape in Eastern Europe, that the story would be attributed to her. Youth and vitality were connected to blood, and it wasn't a big leap to think that new blood would keep someone fit and healthy.

Elizabeth's story is told in various different ways, the most common being that an enraged Báthory slapped a servant and as a result got some of the victim's blood on her hand. On wiping it away, she observed that the skin looked noticeably younger and healthier. After this discovery she would regularly bathe in tubs full of the stuff, or take a 'shower' with bodies cut and hung from the ceiling, covering her in blood.

The first time the legend appeared in print was in 1729 in Tragica Historia by a Jesuit scholar. This account is thought to have been gained from local oral history that has either been warped in translation or was hearsay from the start.

Biographers of Báthory have drawn parallels between the Countess and the title character of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), insinuating that the former – as much as Vlad the Impaler – was the inspiration for the latter. Whether or not she spawned Stoker's icon is up for debate, but it is certain that Báthory has had a large impact on the modern-day bloodsucker, contributing to the iconography of vampire fiction through the likes of Hammer's Countess Dracula and provocative Belgian horror *Daughters Of Darkness*, both released in 1971. Less directly her antics are believed to have inspired the 'lesbian vampire' trope, established through Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novella *Carmilla* (1872), while one of her haunts – Čachtice Castle in Slovakia – served as Count Orlok's home in silent film masterpiece *Nosferatu* (1922).


Blood.
The more she drinks, the prettier she gets. The prettier she gets, the thirstier she gets.
Countess Dracula
20th Century Fox Presents A HAMMER PRODUCTION
COUNTESS DRACULA
Starring INGRID PITT · NIGEL GREEN · SANDOR ELÈS
Produced by ALEXANDER PAAL Directed by PETER SASDY Screenplay by JEREMY PAUL Color by DeLuxe
PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
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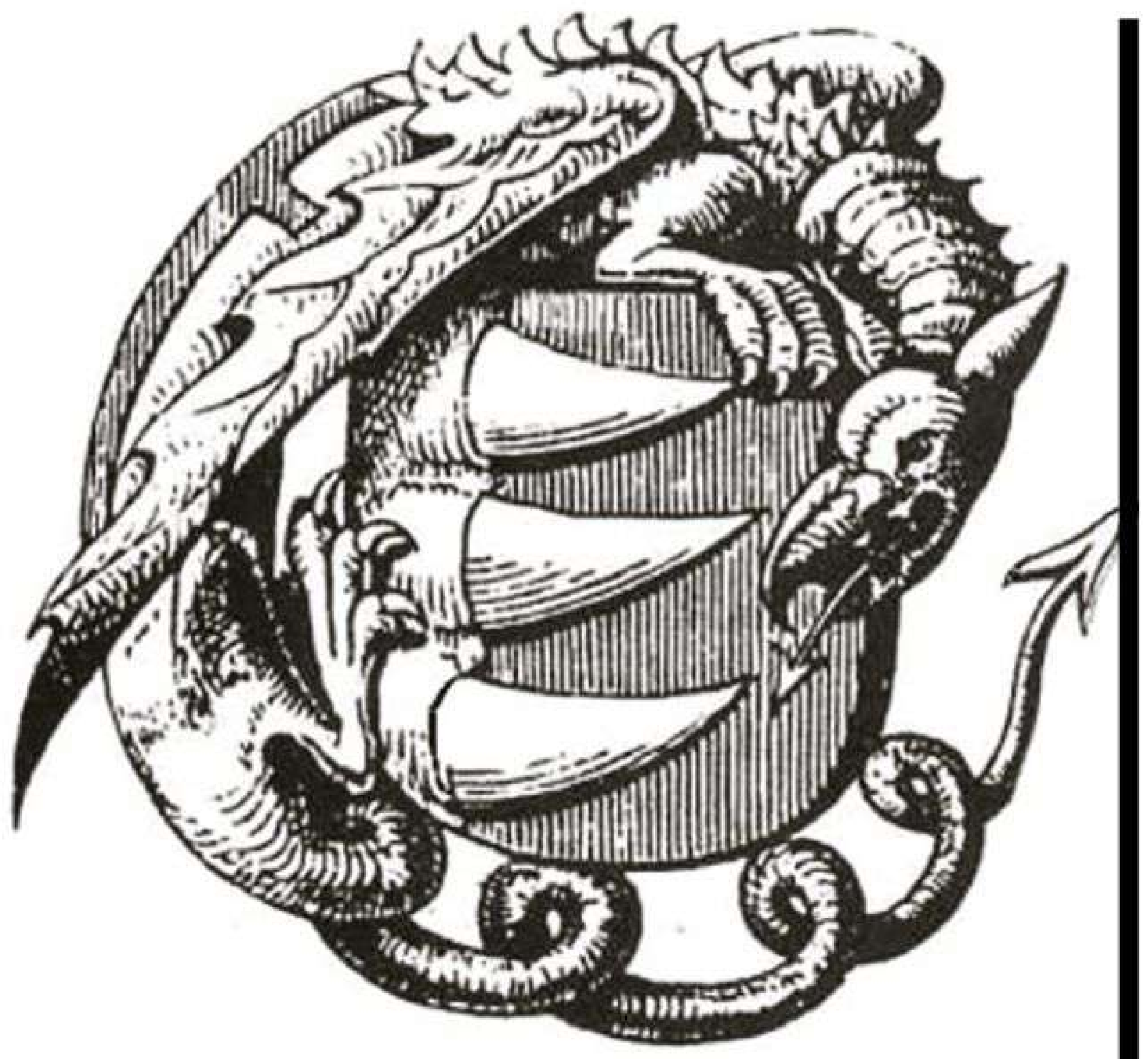


Báthory's coat of arms, honouring the Order of the Dragon and the family's origin story

The Báthory family

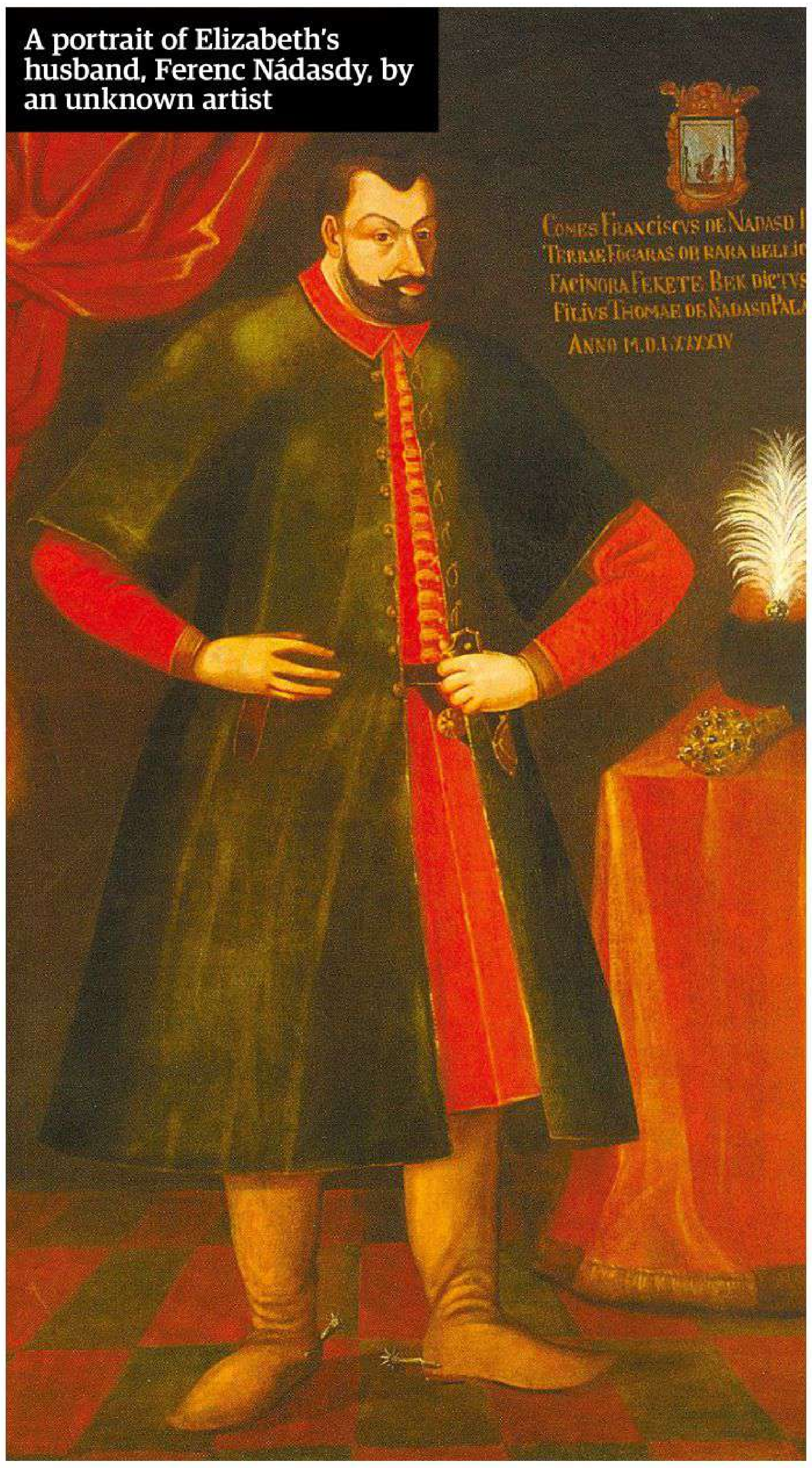
Elizabeth's ancestors rose to flex significant political power in Hungary

The origins of the Báthorys have been traced back to 11th-century Hungarian nobles who emigrated from Swabia (now modern-day Germany). The family would split a few centuries later into two distinct branches, the Ecsed and Somlyo, with Elizabeth's parents coming from both branches.

The Báthory's connection with the Order of the Dragon, Elizabeth's coat of arms and dragons in general can be traced back to the legendary origins of the family. In the year 900, a pious warrior named Vitus slew a dragon in the swamps of Ecsed and was gifted the name Báthory in recognition. The three dragon talons on the coat of arms are thought to represent the three lance thrusts it took to slay the drake.

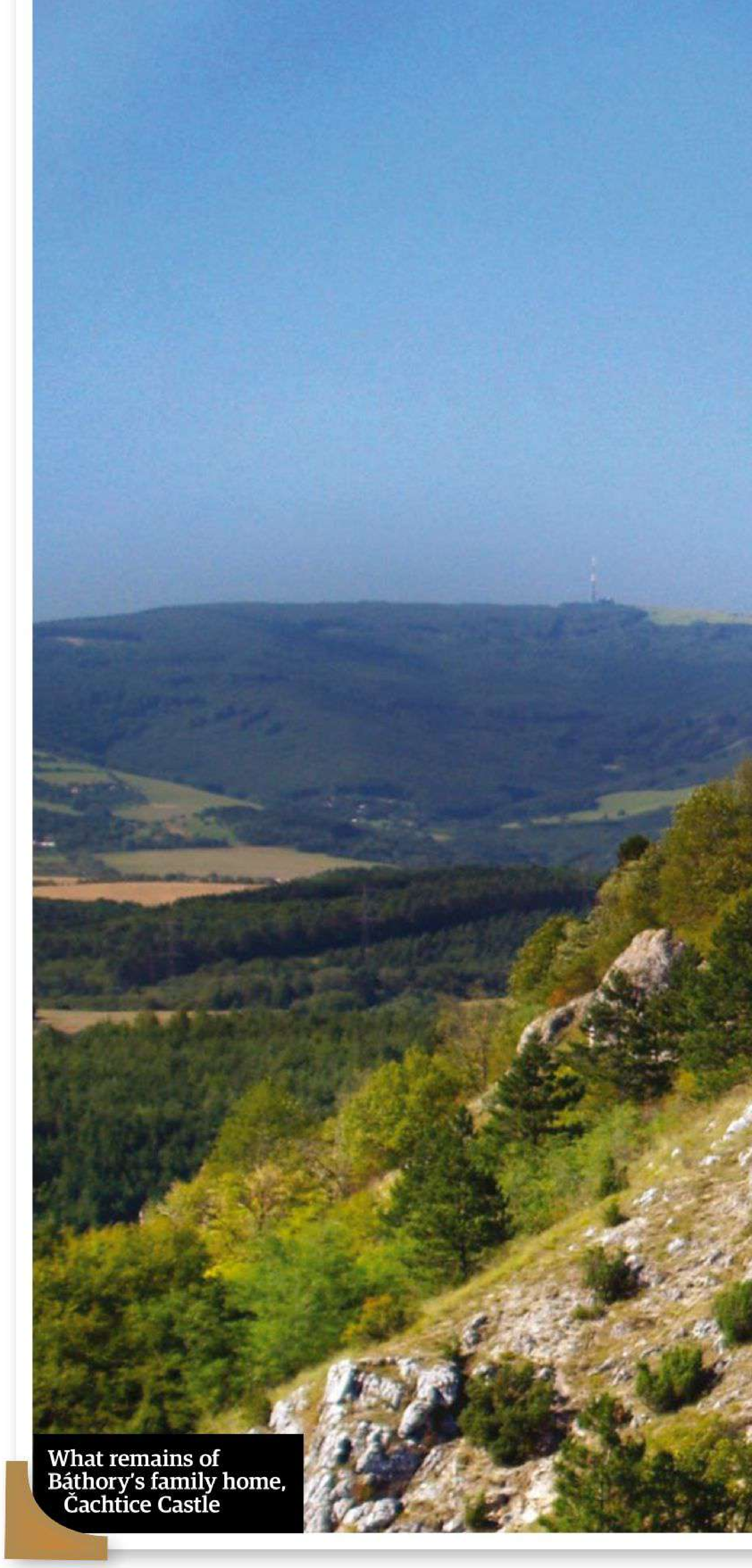
The Báthorys would grow to hold many religious, military and civil roles in government. A prime example would be Cardinal Andrew Barthory, who would become the Grand Master of the Order of the Dragon. Perhaps the most famous member of the family, Elizabeth not withstanding of course, is Stephen Báthory, who became king of Poland in 1576. He has been described as the 'darling of both the Polish public opinion and Polish historians' and was uncle to Elizabeth through her mother, but probably didn't factor much in her life. His reign is hailed as one of the strongest in Polish history where he beat the Habsburg candidate to the throne, defended the borders from Russian incursions and attempted to build a great state from Poland, Muscovy and Transylvania (which he was count of).

These prominent connections across Eastern Europe have been theorised as another reason why Elizabeth was not brought to trial. The embarrassment allegations like Elizabeth's could bring to the family name would have been acute and so the Báthorys used their power and influence to have her imprisoned instead.



A portrait of Elizabeth's husband, Ferenc Nádasdy, by an unknown artist

Comes Franciscus de Nadasd
Terrae Fogaras oh rara belli
Facinora Fekete Bek dictus
Filius Thomae de Nadasd Pala
Anno M.D.LXXXIX



What remains of Báthory's family home, Čachtice Castle

her own castle, bricked up in a room with a sliver of space to have food passed through and to allow airflow. Her lands and wealth were stripped from her and divided up among her relatives.

In this way she would die alone four years later. Her last recorded words were her telling her guard, "Look, how cold my hands are." "It's nothing, mistress. Just go and lie down," was the reply. She was found dead in the morning and buried nearby to the outrage of the villagers who rioted. Her body was then moved to the Báthory family crypt but has since disappeared and to this day it is not known where her remains lie.

By all accounts the life of Elizabeth Báthory was one of a sadist, someone who enjoyed inflicting pain and suffering on her fellow Hungarians. There is some evidence, however, that could show her in a different light; one that paints her as a victim of political manoeuvring and slander on a massive scale.

By a happy coincidence (for them), or by more sinister connections, many of the Countess's relatives that received new lands had close ties with Count Thurzó, as did many of the witnesses at Bathory's trial. This meant that these people had something to gain from the condemnation and imprisonment of Elizabeth. Naturally, suspicion should be shown to these figures and their accounts in order to view Báthory's actions fairly.

Elizabeth's killing spree is thought to have taken place over a period of almost 20 years – between 1590 and 1609

The confessions from her accomplices were gained under torture, a method that is suspect and often thought of as inadmissible in a modern-day court. This, coupled with Elizabeth's lack of trial and personal defence, has left large gaps in our knowledge of the situation, and in these gaps myths have sprouted and taken hold. With the main evidence levelled against Báthory coming from these confessions and independent witness testimonies, there are some who believe that Báthory was the victim of a conspiracy.

This is certainly a possibility, as the removal of a powerful local rival would suit the aims of Thurzó, who would also gain credit for stopping a 'monster'. The extended Báthory family also stood to gain many benefits from the lands that they stood to inherit. Elizabeth's lucrative land holdings would have been seized by the crown, not passed to her

relatives, if she had been tried and convicted. It is also very convenient that with the condemnation of Báthory, the Hungarian King would be free of his large debts to her estates.

Premature deaths and the beating of servants was a grisly part of daily life in this period, and these actions could have been used to pin non-existent crimes on Báthory. Some ideas go even further, stating that many of the 'torture' devices used were actually healing instruments, that when she was accused of burning servants with red hot irons she was not doing it for pleasure, but as a way of staunching a bleeding wound; trying to save lives rather than take them. The wounds left behind by such drastic actions could well be perceived as torture wounds if the context was unknown; taking Thurzó's surprise visit as an example.

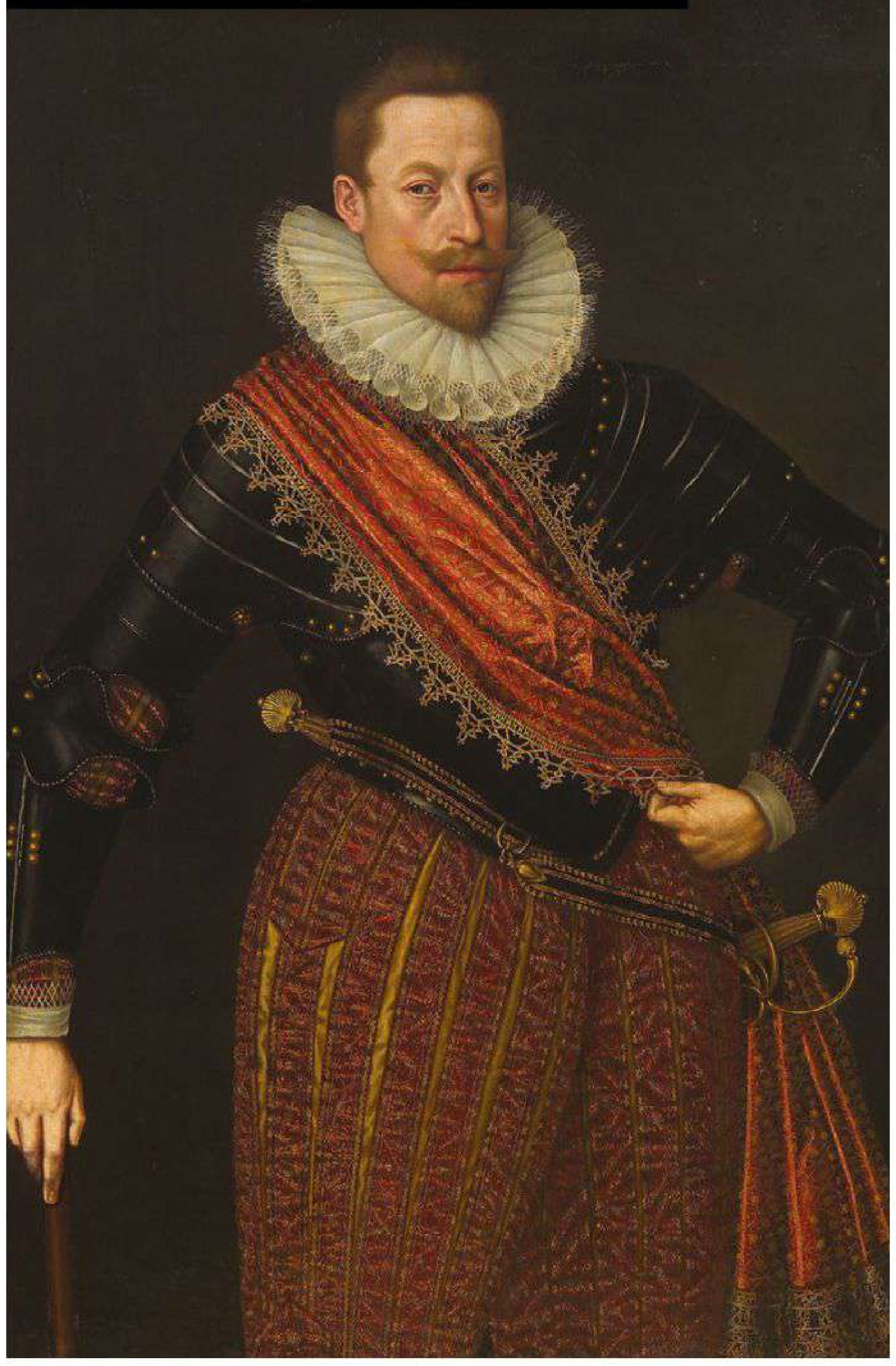
These arguments are plausible, although Thurzó did not initiate the investigation on his own, but was ordered to by the authority of King Matthias II. The King had received years of complaints by Magyari, a local Lutheran minister, who was concerned about the activity coming from within Báthory's estate. It is also known that Thurzó did not go to the Báthory estate with the sole intention of arresting Elizabeth and seems to have been genuinely attempting to find out the truth behind the accusations. He may have believed the murmurings of terrible goings on were spread by Elizabeth's cousins in an attempt to destabilise the region and make a power play for the crown. Whatever the truth of the matter, in the eyes of the contemporary nobles, the perpetrators of these terrible crimes had met their ultimate fate and the case was closed.

With over 300 witness testimonies and eyewitness accounts from some of her closest advisors, it is difficult to believe that there is not a kernel of truth in the stories. The question becomes how much is to be believed and were there other factors at play than simple justice?

The figure of 650 victims seems high, and it is generally agreed that the actual number was much lower. Whatever the truth, the fact remains that Elizabeth Báthory and her story has become one of the most infamous ever told.

Čachtice Castle is now part of modern-day Slovakia and is located close to the border with the Czech Republic

Emperor Matthias as Archduke by Lucas van Valckenborch, painted in 1583



Billy the Kid

It's the iconic Wild West story and thus, in the 150 years since its making, it has become fraught with embellishment and myth. What was the real history of the hunt that made the legendary lawman Pat Garrett?

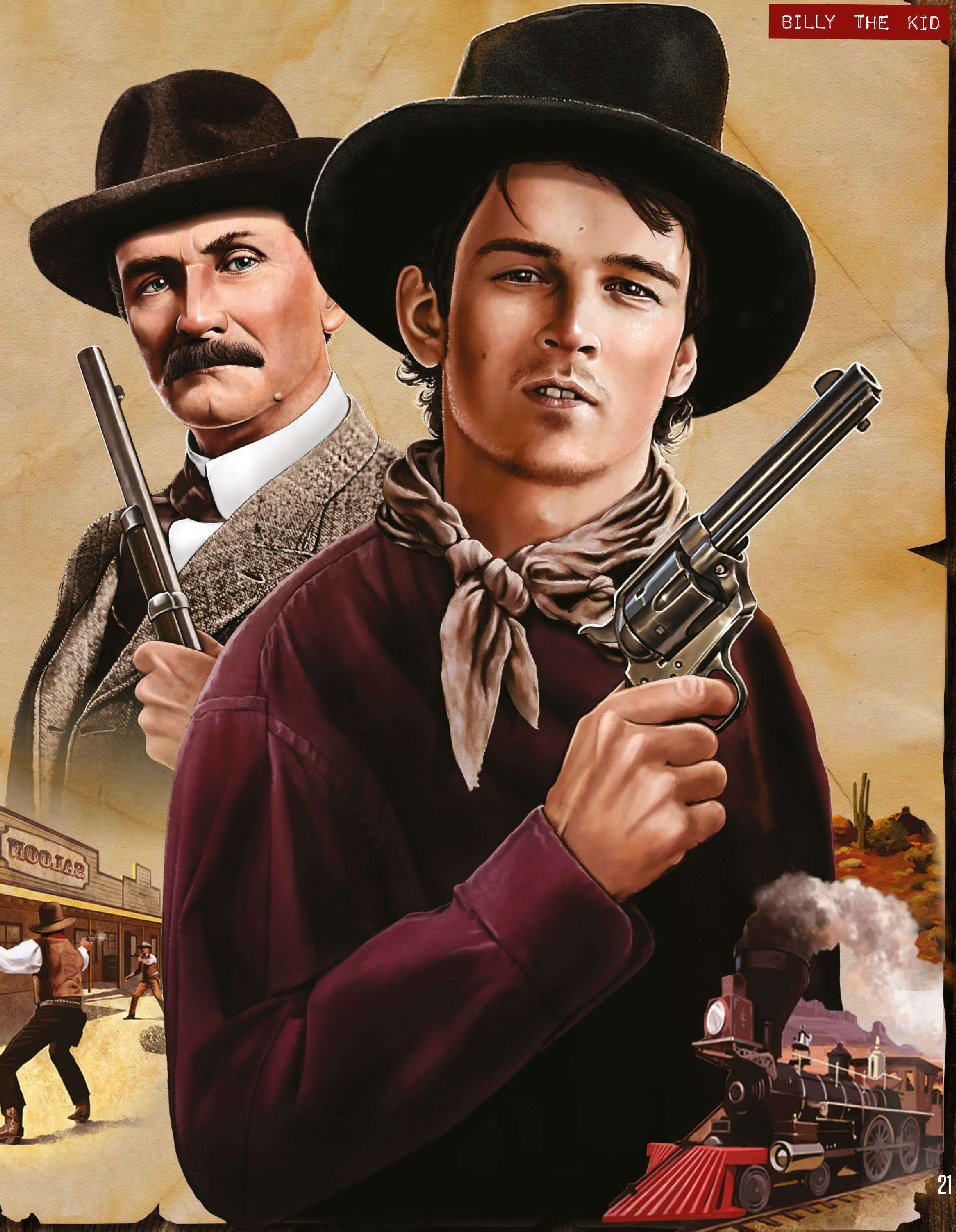
By the late 19th century, cartographers had mapped much of the world, and the globe, almost as we know it today, was a well-established fact. To the east, the Victorian Empire had peaked despite being ousted from its interests in the New World colonies a century earlier, and the decades that followed Independence Day had seen a fledgling United States simmer with civil war and lawlessness. In the wake of the British, the new American government had made vast territorial gains, picking up the entire Louisiana region – a huge swathe of grasslands over a million square kilometres – from France's Napoleon Bonaparte for a snip, at just $15 million. Border disputes and infighting followed, but that did not halt the USA's progress from the Great Plains to the coastline of the Golden State.

The boundary of this new nation had spilled westward too rapidly for any population to fill, let alone for the lawmakers of the White House to effectively control. The West was true frontier territory, its people as feral and keen as its unrelenting climate, no place for the timid or fragile. This crucible forged two characters, the outlaw Billy the Kid and sheriff Patrick Floyd Garrett: their independent life stories alone have resonated through generations, but it is Pat's pursuit and the ultimate death of the Kid that has defined them both.

Hollywood has traditionally presented an extremely romanticised notion of this era, so while the stereotypes of sheriff, outlaw, saloon owner, settler, Mexican, cowboy and their ilk can usually be taken with a mere pinch of salt, the black and white morality of the Silver Screen is laughably far from the truth. There was often little to separate lawman from lawless but a small steel star, so we're going to rub away the sepia and journey to New Mexico in late 1880, where Pat Garrett has just been appointed the sheriff of Lincoln County.

While some estimates suggest Billy the Kid killed 21 men, the figure was more likely between four and nine

Garrett was an imposing 1.9 metres of lean gunman and a known deadeye shot. Coupled with his imposing figure and reputation, he made a first-class choice for a visiting detective in the employ of the Treasury Department, Azariah Wild, to help track down the source of $30,000 worth of counterfeit greenbacks that were circulating the county. Garrett himself employed another


SALOON

The shooting of Billy the Kid solidified Garrett's fame as a lawman and gunman

man – Barney Mason – to bait the two suspected of distributing this currency: ranch owner Dan Dedrick and another, WH West, who had made himself and their intentions clear in a letter that Mason had intercepted. Those intentions were that they would launder the money by buying cattle in Mexico as fast as they could with an assistant, who would unwittingly take the hit in the event that their ruse was discovered. Mason was to be the fall guy. Now that they had the advantage, Garrett instructed Mason to travel to the White Oaks ranch and play along with their nefarious plans.

In the brisk New Mexico winter, Mason rode out to Dedrick's. There, he ran into three gunslingers on the run from the authorities: Dave Rudabaugh, who had killed a Las Vegas jailer during a break-out; Billy Wilson, another murderer yet to be caught; and the last was none other than Billy the Kid – the unlawful killer who had busted himself out of jail once already, made a living by cattle rustling and gambling, surrounded himself with like-minded outlaws and whose reputation was on the cusp of snowballing towards near mythological status. The attitude of the era was such that a lawman and a wanted man could be trading campfire stories one day, then bullets the next. The Kid and Garrett were once thought to have gambled together, and Mason was also known to be on friendly terms with these three. Thus, both parties made their pleasantries then entered a game of high-stakes mind games, whereby the Kid attempted to ferret out the true nature of Mason's visit (suspecting he had come to ascertain his location and then report to the sheriff), while Mason threw the Kid a red herring, stating that he was there to take in some horses.

The Kid didn't buy this ruse. Smelling a rat, he met with Dedrick and his fellow outlaws with the intention of killing Mason, but Dedrick feared the repercussions would ruin his illicit plans, so the Kid relaxed his proverbial itchy trigger finger.

A local posse on the hunt for Billy had been raised and the town of White Oaks was agitated with the news that the outlaw was in the area. The heat was too much for Mason to follow through with his orders without raising suspicion, so he lay low for a few days before returning to report at Garrett's place in Roswell. Shortly after, Garrettt received a letter from Roswell Prison's Captain Lea, detailing the criminal activities of the Kid and his companions in the area. Garrett was commissioned as a United States marshal and given a warrant for the arrest of Henry McCarty, aka William H Bonney, aka Billy the Kid, on the charge of murder. The hunt was on. The Kid's days were numbered and on 27

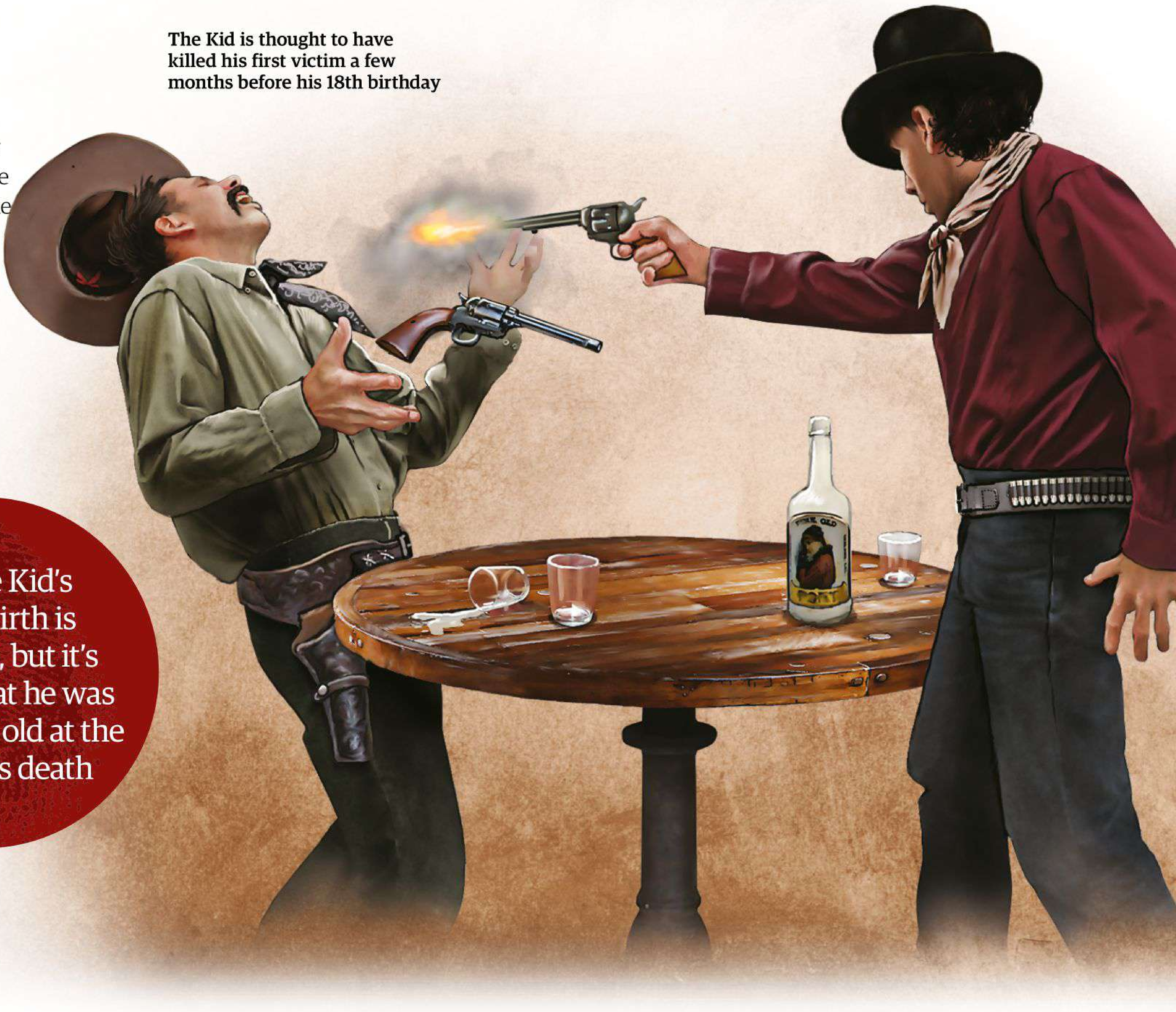
Born in New York City, Billy the Kid moved to New Mexico after brief periods in Kansas and Indiana

The Kid rode for a time with the gang of cattle rustlers known as the Jesse Evans Gang

November 1880, the curtain was lifted on one of history's most famous Wild West dramas.

The new marshal already had a reputation and might have put the fear of God into the common criminal, but he was no fool. The Kid was by now a true desperado, one who had cut his teeth in the revenge killings of the Lincoln County War, and he was more likely to go out in a blaze of glory than he was to lay down his arms and come quietly. Garrett had raised a posse of about a dozen men from the citizens of Roswell and made his way to Fort Sumner to pick up the outlaws' trail, which would lead them to his suspected hideout at Los Portales. The many miles of desert scrub and overgrown track were neither an easy nor uneventful ride, and saw a Kid associate named Tom Foliard flee the posse in a hail of bullets. When the 'hideout' at Los Portales – a hole in a cliff face with a fresh water spring – turned up nothing more than a few head of cattle, the posse fed and watered themselves before returning to Fort Sumner, where Garrett dismissed them. It was not the showdown he had hoped for, but Garrett wasn't the quitting kind.

Over the next few days, Garrett, accompanied by Mason, encountered Sheriff Romero leading a posse of swaggering Mexicans to Puerto de



The Kid is thought to have killed his first victim a few months before his 18th birthday

Billy the Kid's date of birth is unknown, but it's thought that he was just 21 years old at the time of his death

The Wild West in numbers

The times were hard, but surprisingly, the crimes were nowhere near as bad as they are in the western United States today

3 murders

The highest annual body count for Tombstone, Arizona, happened in 1881, the same year as Wyatt Earp's famous gunfight at the OK Corral

$5-10 million

The biggest value stagecoach shipments in today's equivalent – usually gold bullion

6

The number of bank robberies across 15 states from 1859 to 1900. There weren't many banks and with no cars, it was a lot harder to get away with it back then

45

The number of murders from 1870-85 in five Kansas towns, a lower per capita than today

13 May 1881

Billy the Kid's hanging date set by Lincoln county courts

28

The number of times the outlaw Black Bart robbed stagecoaches in California, making thousands of dollars a year

FIREARM SHOWDOWN

For shootouts, showdowns, soldiers and civilians, these were the guns that won the West. The Kid and Garrett made darned sure their tools of the trade were the best

Pat Garrett's Sharps rifle

USA 1850-81

- » **DESIGNERS:** CHRISTIAN SHARPS
- » **MANUFACTURER:** SHARPS RIFLE MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- » **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 120,000+
- » **EFFECTIVE RANGE:** 460M
- » **WEIGHT:** 4.3KG
- » **CALIBRE:** .52
- » **FEED SYSTEM:** 1 ROUND
- » **ACTION:** FALLING BLOCK, BREECH LOADING
- » **ADVANTAGES:** VERSATILE
- » **DISADVANTAGES:** WASTEFUL, EXPENSIVE
- » **POPULAR USES:** MILITARY, HUNTING, SPORT

Pat Garrett's Frontier Colt

USA 1878-1907

- » **DESIGNERS:** WILLIAM MASON
- » **MANUFACTURER:** COLT'S PATENT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- » **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 51,210
- » **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 253 M/S
- » **WEIGHT:** 1,048G
- » **CALIBRE:** .44-40 WINCHESTER
- » **FEED SYSTEM:** CYLINDER MAGAZINE
- » **ACTION:** DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER
- » **ADVANTAGES:** INTERCHANGEABLE AMMUNITION WITH RIFLE, GOOD STOPPING POWER
- » **DISADVANTAGES:** NONE
- » **POPULAR USES:** CIVILIAN, SHERIFF

Luna, shot and wounded a felon named Mariano Leiva, talked his way out of Romero and his posse's attempts to arrest him for this shooting and then learned of another party – led by an agent for the Panhandle stockmen the Kid had rustled cattle from – who was also on the trail of the Kid. Steel nerves, a steady hand, sharp wit and some luck had eventually seen Garrett true once again.

Garrett met with Panhandle agent Frank Stewart at Las Vegas, the former Spanish colonial town of New Mexico and not the bright-light city-to-be more than 1,000 kilometres to the west. They left on 14 December to catch up with Stewart's party and broke the news to them: some baulked at the idea of an encounter with the Kid and his gang, but Stewart did not reproach any man who had reservations. "Do as you please boys, but there is no time to talk," he told them. "Those who are going with me, get ready at once. I want no man who hesitates." In the end, Stewart, Mason and Garrett added a further six men to their cause.

Ahead of the party, Garrett had sent a spy, a trustworthy man named Jose Roibal, who rode tirelessly to Fort Sumner to sniff the Kid out. Roibal performed his duty in a suitably subtle fashion and returned to meet Garrett with the news that the outlaw he sought was certainly at Fort Sumner, that he was on the lookout for Garrett and Mason, and that he was prepared to ambush them. The Kid had no idea that Garrett had company with him.

Following this, the posse made their way to an old hospital building on the eastern side of the town to await the return of the outlaws. The Kid arrived sooner than expected. A light snow carpeted the ground so that, despite the low light of the evening, it was still bright outside. Nevertheless, Garrett and company were able to position themselves around the building to their advantage. Outlaws Foliard and Pickett rode up front and were first to feel the sting of the posse's six-shooters, though whose bullets killed Foliard that day remains unknown. Garrett himself missed Pickett, who wheeled around and made for their ranch retreat along with the Kid, Bowdre, Wilson and Rudabaugh – the stagecoach robber and a particularly unsavoury character who the Kid admitted to being the only man he feared.

The marshal's posse regrouped and made preparations for the chase. There were just five men to track now. Garrett had learned from another reliable local that they had holed up in an abandoned house near Stinking Springs, a piece of no-man's land where murky water bubbled up into a pool in a depression. It was a few hours before dawn that they made this short ride, which proved their new information true: horses were tied to the rafters outside the building. The Kid was cornered

Billy the Kid's 1873 Winchester rifle USA 1873-1919

- **DESIGNERS:** BENJAMIN TYLER HENRY AND NELSON KING
- **MANUFACTURER:** WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 720,000
- **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 335 M/S
- **WEIGHT:** 4.3KG
- **CALIBER:** .44-40 WINCHESTER
- **FEED SYSTEM:** 15-ROUND TUBE MAGAZINE
- **ACTION:** LEVER-ACTION
- **ADVANTAGES:** INTERCHANGEABLE AMMUNITION WITH PISTOL, EASILY TRANSPORTED, ACCURATE
- **DISADVANTAGES:** MAGAZINE FEEDING PROBLEMS
- **POPULAR USES:** HUNTING, CIVILIAN

Billy the Kid's Colt 1873 Single Action Army USA 1873-1941

- **DESIGNERS:** WILLIAM MASON AND CHARLES BRINKERHOFF RICHARDS
- **MANUFACTURER:** COLT'S PATENT FIREARMS MANUFACTURING COMPANY
- **NUMBER PRODUCED:** 357,859
- **MUZZLE VELOCITY:** 253 M/S
- **WEIGHT:** 1,048G (WITH BARREL)
- **CALIBRE:** .45 COLT
- **FEED SYSTEM:** 6-SHOT CYLINDER
- **ACTION:** SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVER
- **ADVANTAGES:** WELL BALANCED, SIMPLE TO USE, GOOD STOPPING POWER
- **DISADVANTAGES:** DIFFICULT TO FIRE RAPIDLY
- **POPULAR USES:** MILITARY, CIVILIAN MODEL

and furthermore, Garrett's approach had not been detected, so they still had the advantage of surprise. The posse split and spread out along the perimeter to play the waiting game in the darkness.

As day broke, one of the gang left the building via its only exit. In the half-light, he appeared to have the height, build and most importantly, was wearing the characteristic Stetson of Billy the Kid. Knowing the Kid would not give up easily, Garrett signalled to the posse, who peppered the figure with bullets. Mortally wounded, Charley Bowdre stumbled back into the house, before the Kid pushed him back out with the words: "They have murdered you Charley, but you can still get revenge. Kill some of the sons of bitches before you die." But if the blood hadn't all leaked out of him by then, the fight certainly had, because Bowdre lurched towards the posse and collapsed before he could even get his hand to his pistol.

The jig was up for Garrett, but the Kid's gang was now down to four and their only exit was covered. Just to tip the scales further in his favour, Garrett shot one of the three horses dead to partially cover the exit and then shot the ropes on the other two, both of which promptly cantered away. The marshal felt he was in a position now, to parley: "How you fixed in there, Kid?"

"Pretty well," came the reply, "but we have no wood to get breakfast."

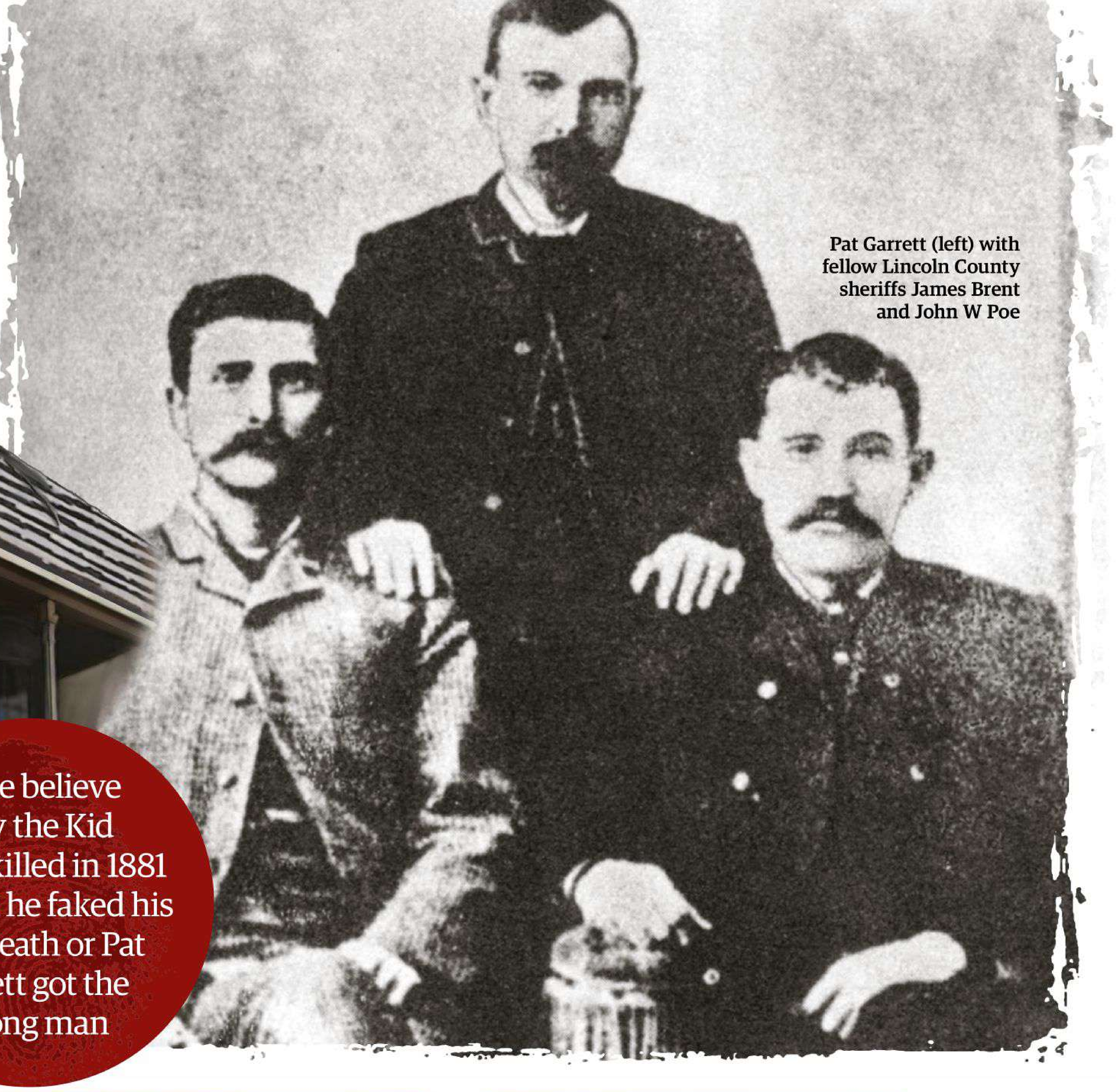
"Come out and get some. Be a little sociable."

"Can't do it, Pat. Business is too confining. No time to run around."

An idea struck Garrett. Having rode through the pre-dawn and played the waiting game in the bitter cold, his men were likewise famished, so he sent for some provisions from Wilcox's ranch; a few hours later, a fire had been built. The sweet scent of roasting meat further weakened the outlaws' resolve until Rudabaugh dangled a filthy handkerchief out of a window in surrender. An eager foursome exited the house to collect the meal that had just cost them their freedom.

Garrett now had his man, but the Kid was as slippery as an eel. They survived a lynch mob at Las Vegas before the Kid was tried at Mesilla for the murder of Andrew 'Buckshot' Roberts. He was acquitted in March 1881, but was then found guilty of the murder of Sheriff William Brady and sentenced to be hung five weeks later on 13 May. Because there was no jail in Lincoln county, he was held in a two-storey repurposed warehouse watched by Deputy Sheriff Bell and Deputy Marshal Olinger, where the Kid made the most of a window of opportunity to steal a gun, kill his guards and make a spectacular escape from his prison.

Garrett was smarting when he realised his inadequate provision for the incarceration of the Kid



Pat Garrett (left) with fellow Lincoln County sheriffs James Brent and John W Poe

Some believe Billy the Kid wasn't killed in 1881 and that he faked his own death or Pat Garrett got the wrong man

EXPERT Q&A

Robert Stahl

Robert is a historian, professor emeritus at Arizona State University and member of the Billy The Kid Outlaw Gang (BTKOG) – a non-profit organisation with the aim of preserving the truth and promoting education in the history of Billy the Kid.

Several theories counter the reports of the Kid's death with tales of his survival. Why do you think these tales persist today?

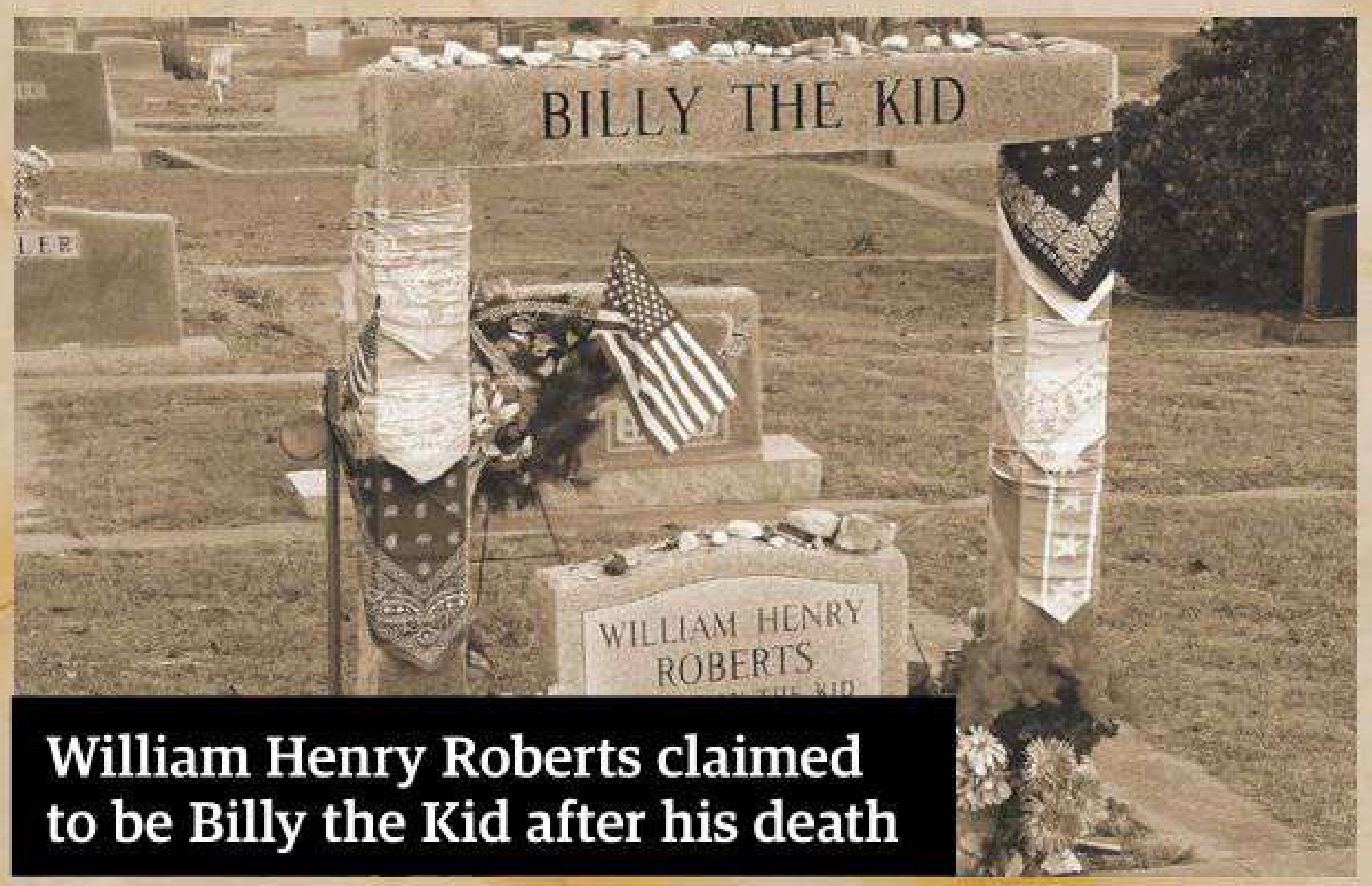
Number one is that a great many people who accept the 'survival' tale have not read the histories of the Kid's death by serious historians, so they are susceptible to entertaining stories about the Kid not being killed. Number two is the fact that many people cannot accept that it was mere coincidence that Garrett and the Kid were in Pete Maxwell's bedroom at the same time while believing the Kid was too smart or too fast on the draw to allow himself to be killed in the dark as he was. Number three is the fact that many documentaries – even those that include professional historians – bring up the rumours that the Kid was not killed as though these rumours have a touch of credibility.

Is it possible that Garrett could have shot the wrong man in that darkened room?

The whole hamlet of more than 50 people saw the Kid's body once or more during the morning of his death, as his body was washed and clothed by local women and was on display in the saloon for part of the morning. It was also taken back to Pete Maxwell's bedroom and placed at or near the spot where the Kid fell. Not one of the individuals who were there ever said it was not the Kid. Indeed all went to their graves, some over 50 years after the Kid's death, insisting they saw the Kid dead. Furthermore, six men who knew the Kid well both in person and on sight served on the coroner's jury, and all swore it was the Kid. So there is ample eyewitness support by numerous credible persons that Garrett did not kill the wrong man in that darkened room.

You've been pursuing a death certificate from the New Mexico Supreme Court for the man known as 'Billy the Kid', for 15 July 1881. Why wasn't that originally issued? What would the reason be for the court not to create the certificate today?

My colleagues, Dr Nancy N Stahl and Marilyn Stahl Fischer, and I pursued a death certificate for the Kid because one was never created – and as part of that certificate we have been adamant about the fact that it should include the Kid's actual death date of 15 July 1881 as opposed to the traditional date of 14 July. The coroner's jury report never stated a time or date of death, which was typical of the era in rural areas of the Old West. Furthermore, I have yet to find a violent death in New Mexico in the 1800s that was followed by a death certificate being created. The Supreme Court cannot 'create' a death certificate, but can order the state office that can to do its duty and create one. We went to the Supreme Court after months of trying to get the Office of the Medical Investigator to act. They refused to do their statutory duties and then refused to get back to us. We had no other legal recourse in New Mexico other than to go to the Supreme Court. We supplied credible and substantial documentary evidence to the Supreme Court for them to act in our favour, but they have not issued the court order to the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator for them to act. We believe that the Supreme Court and the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator consider our efforts to be publicity stunts rather than a good faith request by three historians to correct the historical record.



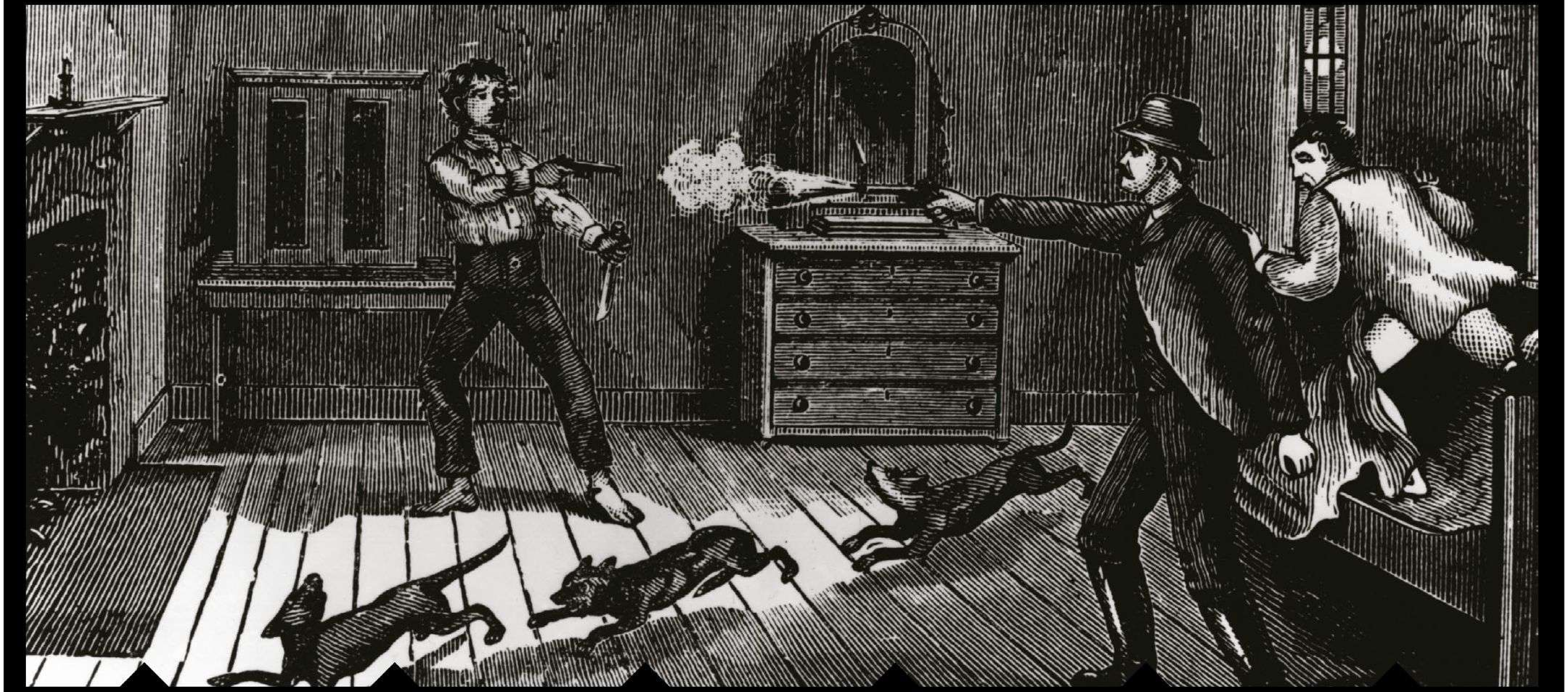
William Henry Roberts claimed to be Billy the Kid after his death

The BTKOG seeks to preserve and promote the truth about the Kid. Is there much in the way of rumour surrounding the legend you'd like to quash?

I do believe that important events in the current accepted stories of his escape from the Lincoln County Jail on 28 April need to be 'squashed', such as the notion that he picked up a gun in the privy when he went to relieve himself and that he intended all along to kill Bob Olinger. Another that needs to end immediately is the rumour that there was widespread belief that Garrett did not kill the 'real' Billy the Kid. Quite the contrary, for more than three decades after 1881 there were no stories – not even a hint of a rumour – printed in even one New Mexico newspaper that suggested the Kid was still alive. Indeed, at the time of his death in 1908, Garrett was well recognised throughout New Mexico and the nation as the man who killed Billy the Kid. Had there been any doubt, he would not have been acclaimed by everyone as the killer of the Kid.

How the kid met his maker

A blow-by-blow account of how Pat Garrett sent Billy the Kid to his grave



23.55 14 July 1881
The Kid is in one of the run-down houses on Peter Maxwell's property when he decides he's hungry, grabs a knife and makes his way over to Maxwell's house to cut himself some beef.

00.00 15 July 1881
Garrett has already entered the house himself and goes to the bedroom to speak to Maxwell to glean information on the whereabouts of the Kid. He sits on a chair near his pillow.

00.04
Garrett's companions are outside when the Kid passes them, but they have no idea what he looks like and this person speaks fluent Spanish to some nearby Mexicans, so they don't identify him.

00.05
The Kid enters the house. He is barefoot and not wearing his trademark hat. It's dark, so Garrett doesn't recognise him. Garrett stiffens as Maxwell whispers the identity of the man.

00.05.05
As the Kid approaches Maxwell, he makes out a second figure in the chair. Garrett pulls his gun and, almost simultaneously, the Kid goes for his own revolver, asking: "Quien es? Quien es?"

00.05.06
A heartbeat later, Garrett has pulled the trigger and thrown himself to the floor for another shot, but his aim was true. The Kid falls to the floor and barely has time to exhale before he is dead.

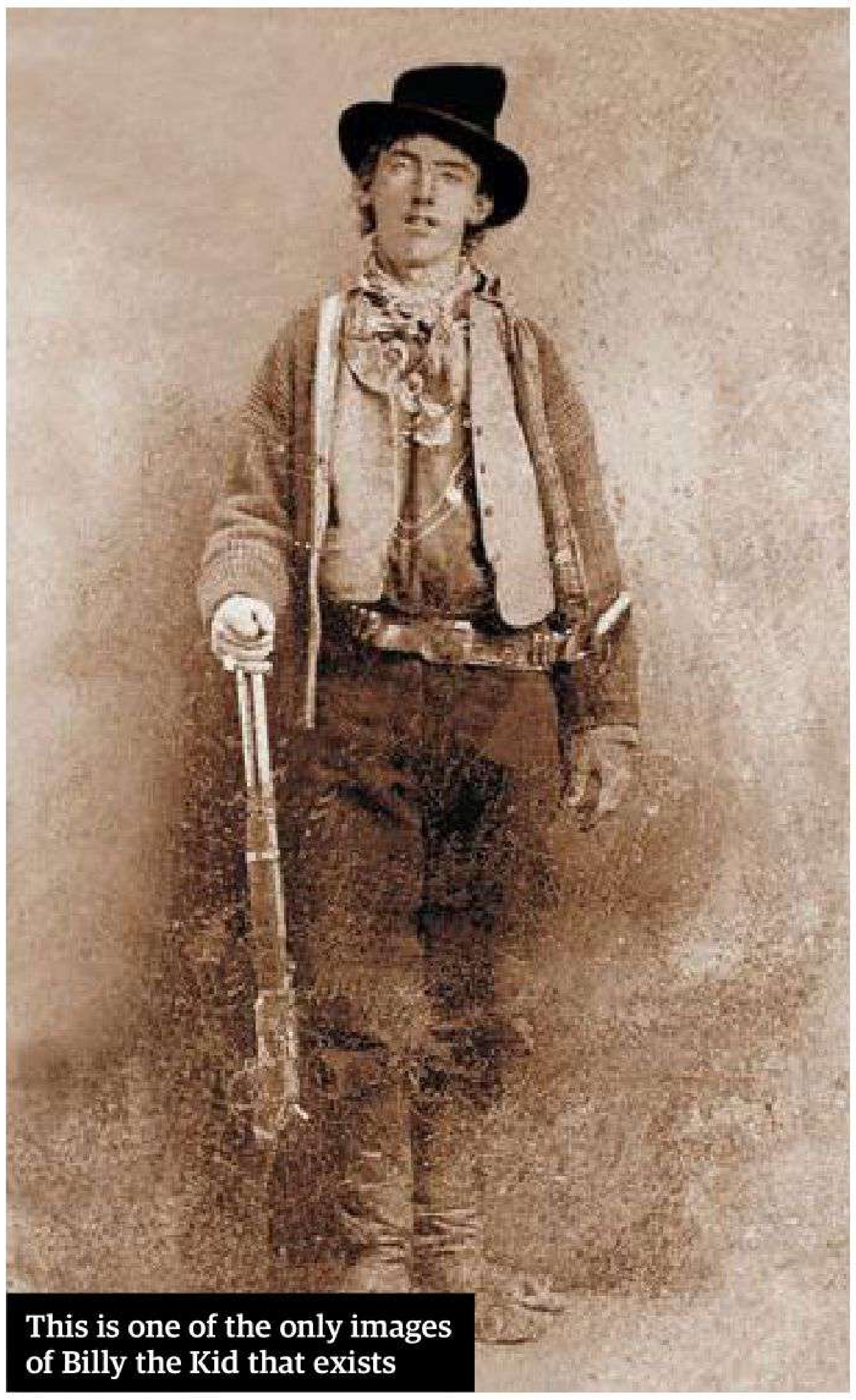
and returned to Fort Sumner, where the Kid was believed to have fled, but the trail had once again gone cold. For the next two and a half months, Garrett would be kicking over stones well into the sweltering New Mexico summer before his final encounter with the fugitive.

In early July and in the company of Frank Stewart's replacement, John W Poe and Thomas K McKinney, who had been deputised, Garrett could be found a few miles north of Fort Sumner, adjusting his course according to hearsay and instinct. This took them to the home of Peter Maxwell where, near a row of dilapidated buildings, a slim man in a broad-rimmed hat could be heard talking in Spanish to some Mexicans. They had found their man - but none of the trio recognised him from a distance. As it turned out, the Kid hadn't recognised them either. He slipped off the wall he was perched on and walked casually away to Maxwell's house.

After the stand-off at Stinking Springs and the Kid's dramatic escape from jail, his death seems anticlimactic: just after midnight on 15 July, Billy the Kid entered Peter Maxwell's house to pick up some beef for his supper. Garrett was in Pete's darkened bedroom quizzing him on the whereabouts of the Kid when the very man he was hunting stepped through the door. Pete whispered to Garrett his identity and, leaving nothing to chance, Garrett took two shots, struck the Kid in his left breast and killed him.

In the memoirs he wrote shortly after the inquest that had discharged the marshal of his duty and deemed the homicide justifiable, Garrett dedicates no more than a short paragraph to the unfolding scene in the dark room. There was no classic showdown, the men weren't even aware of each other's presence until those final mortal seconds, and with his last words, it seems the Kid didn't even know who had sent him to meet his maker. In as much that the Kid's infamy began to spread during the long nothing periods of Garrett's hunt, when rumour of this rebellious young gunslinger and his long-legged lawman nemesis gestated into legend, his ignominious demise has, perhaps fittingly, been made much of by countless authors and Hollywood film makers since.

The Kid was most famous for cattle rustling and, unlike most Wild West outlaws, never robbed a bank or a train



This is one of the only images of Billy the Kid that exists

De Rais: Sorcery and Satan

Gilles de Rais; warrior, friend of Joan of Arc, Marshal of France. One of history's most evil mass murderers

Gilles de Rais could have been one of France's most heroic historical figures. Instead, he's one of its most notorious. De Rais, once a loyal friend of Joan of Arc, fearless soldier and Marshal of France, is forever associated with depravity, occultism, Devil-worship, human sacrifice and murder.

The Hundred Years' War between England and France was actually an era of recurring campaigns lasting just over a century. Periodically flaring up between 1337 and 1453, it saw the kingdoms of England and France fight campaign after campaign. In France itself, rival factions jockeyed for power and position behind the scenes, while armies marched and fought rivals, schemed and plotted, especially the Burgundians.

In 1425 minor nobleman Gilles de Rais entered the royal court of King Charles VII, officially Dauphin of France until formally crowned at Reims in 1429. The Hundred Years' War, still raging, would continue for years after his coronation. It was the ideal opportunity for an ambitious young nobleman to improve his standing and distinguish himself on the battlefield. Gilles did so, becoming a Marshal of France on the same day Charles VII was crowned King.

> Some believe de Rais was innocent and was in fact the victim of an ecclesiastical plot or an act of revenge

While a member of Charles's court Gilles met another notable figure, Joan of Arc. Gilles and Joan became both comrades-in-arms and firm friends. There has been speculation that her eventual betrayal and execution by the English contributed to Gilles' mental and moral decline. It's certainly possible, but it's unlikely that this act alone would have triggered his homicidal tendencies.

After a lengthy phase of defeats and disillusionment the French were again in the ascendant. Gilles and Joan fought side by side through the legendary siege of Orleans (1428-29), the battles of Jargeau (1429) and Patay (1429) and many lesser but still rather bloody military

© Getty

From highly revered to most feared, Gilles de Rais's crimes were utterly appalling. His fate was entirely self-inflicted engagements. French victory at Patay cost the English 2,200 men and the capture of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.

It also opened the way to Charles VII's coronation and de Rais's promotion to Marshal of France on 17 July 1429. De Rais was also one of four lords chosen to escort the Holy Ampulla to Reims, essential when anointing a new King. At court his star couldn't have risen higher. Joan, by now legendary among the French people and de Rais's staunch friend and ally, accompanied him.

In contrast, the failed siege of Paris damaged Joan's own standing. Suffering heavy casualties for little gain, it raised doubts about her position. Had she become a liability instead of an asset? Did she need to be reined in or removed? What did Charles want to do with so popular a figure who had perhaps served her purpose? The English and the Burgundians knew exactly what they wanted. It may also have suited Charles, by then tired of endless warfare and looking to solidify his own position.

On 23 May 1430 Joan was captured by the Burgundians at Compiègne and sold to the English for 10,000 livres tournois. Accused of heresy and witchcraft, her tribunal was financed by the English, composed entirely of pro-English clerics and overseen by English military commanders.

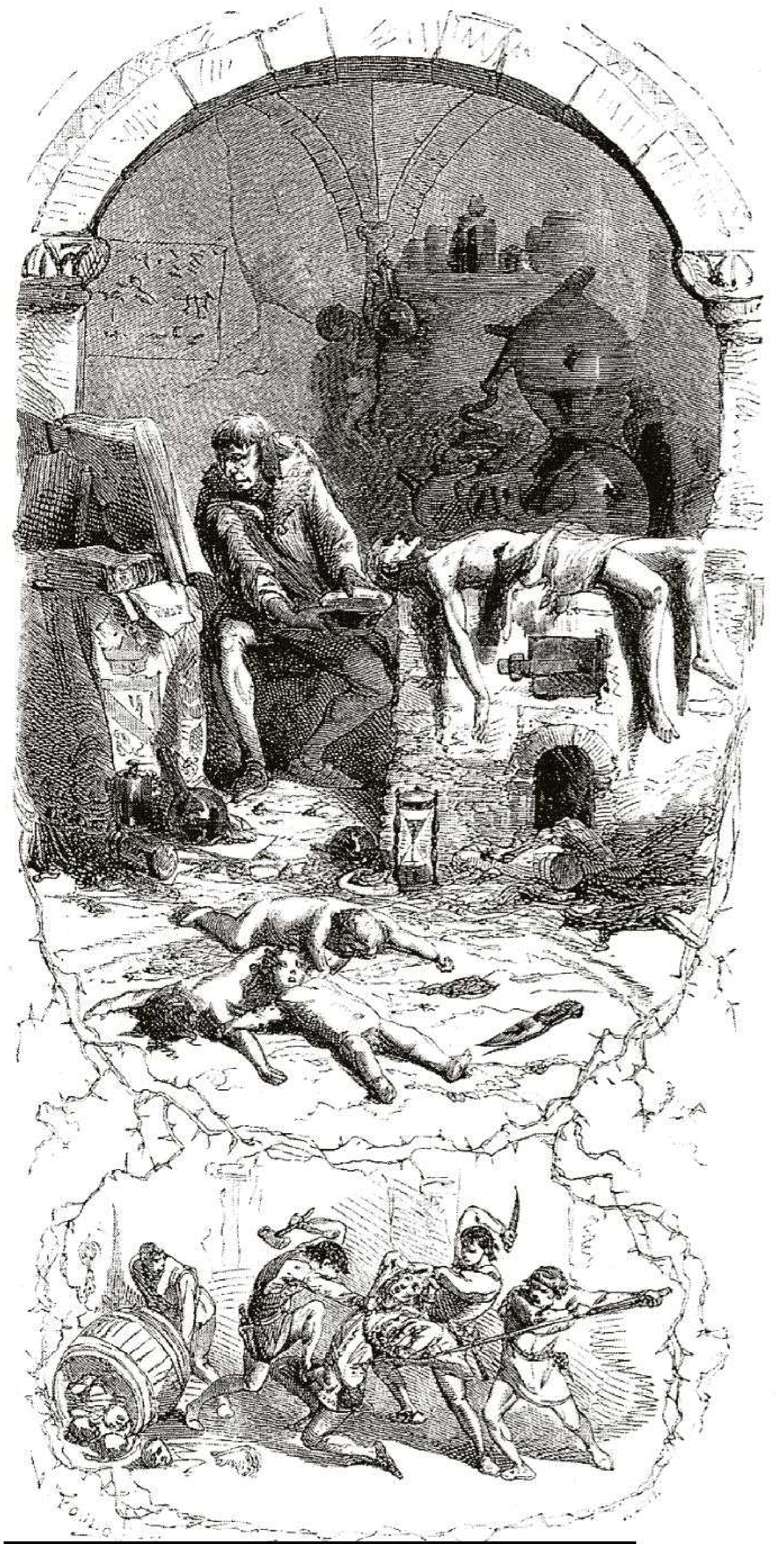
Her chief accuser was the less-than-impartial Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais and a member of the English Council. By meaningful legal standards it was a farce, rigged to secure both Joan's conviction and execution. On fabricated evidence her alleged crimes were 'proven' (to the court's satisfaction, anyway) and at Rouen on 30 May 1431 she was publicly burned.

This was likely a terrible blunder by the English, Joan having been crucial in reviving French fortunes. Ordinary peasants in the French army had been fired with fresh enthusiasm and self-belief by her mere presence during military missions. Her rigged trial and subsequent execution only increased their desire to fight on.

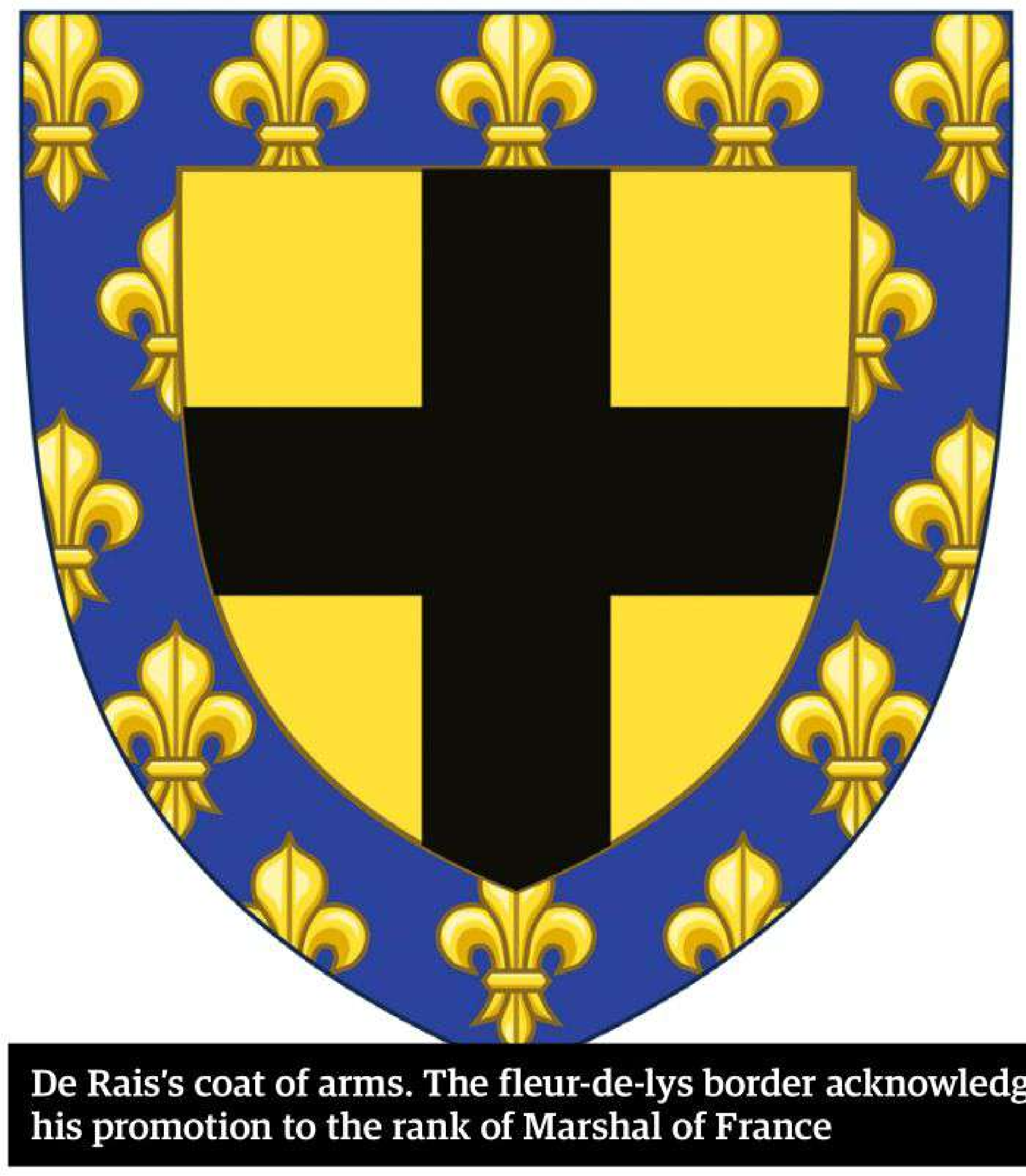
Gilles, however, had done little to help her despite their friendship. Granted, there had been a couple of failed rescue attempts, but no more. He didn't attend her execution, retiring from soldiering in the mid-1430s and returning to his estates and hobbies. One suggestion is that his grief at her death began his descent into insanity, but this remains unproven. His interest in the occult and its rituals, however, is a matter of public record.

His crimes quite likely began as early as 1432 with the death of his grandfather and mentor Jean de Craon. His grandfather had restrained and guided him in many ways and that restraint was now gone. Knowing his elder grandson's

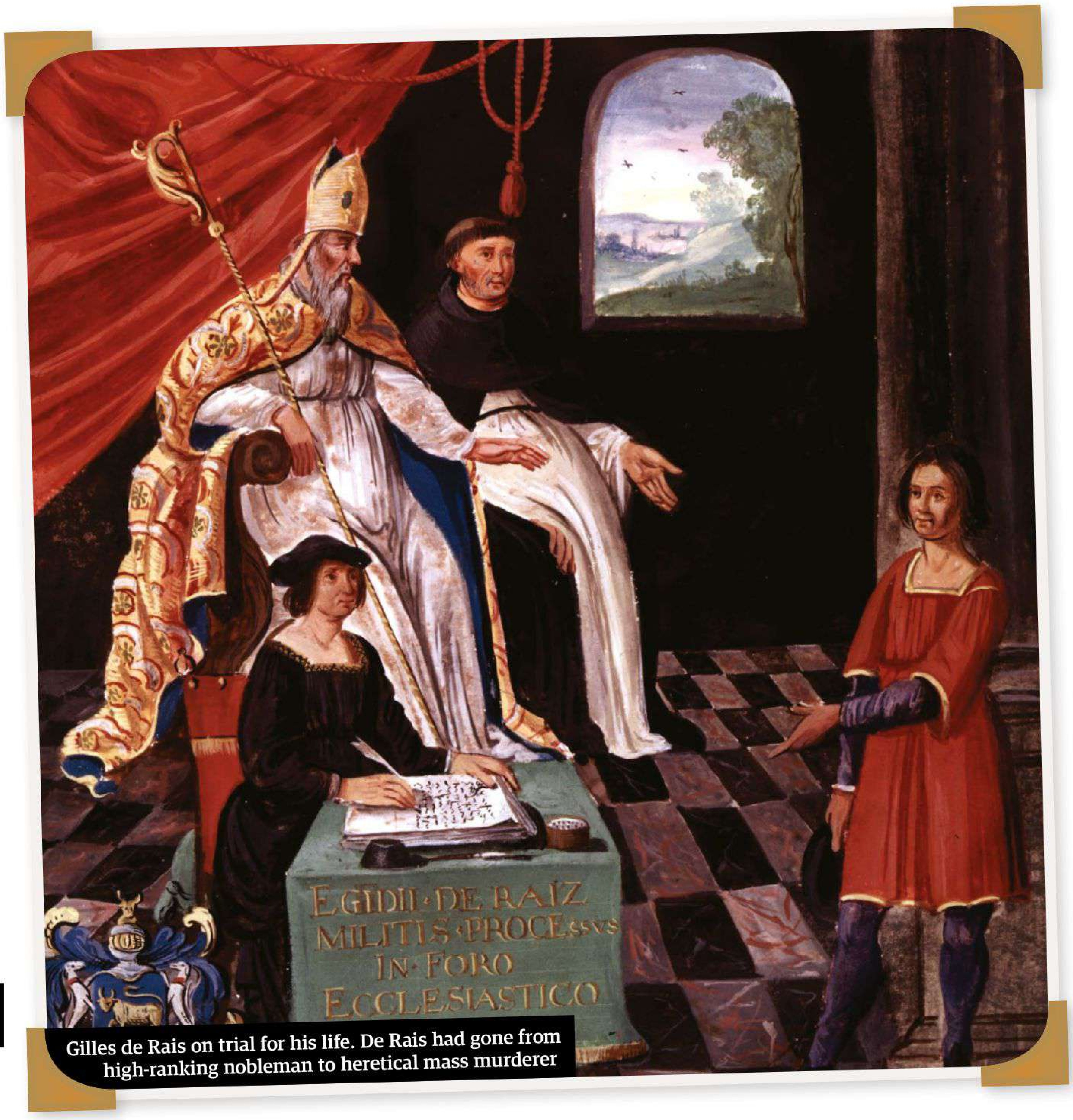
The Battle of Agincourt (1415) occurred during the Hundred Years' War. It remains part of English history and folklore



De Rais's obsession with witchcraft, sorcery, Satanism and occultism cost hundreds of lives. Few regretted the end of his



De Rais's coat of arms. The fleur-de-lys border acknowledges his promotion to the rank of Marshal of France



Gilles de Rais on trial for his life. De Rais had gone from high-ranking nobleman to heretical mass murderer spendthrift tendencies with money and assets, de Craon also slighted de Rais in his will.

De Craon's sword and breastplate bearing the family crest went instead to de Rais's younger brother René de la Suze. That sounds minor today but, at the time, it would have been a serious slap in the face to anyone of de Rais's status. Perhaps his grandfather's death also removed the last barrier to de Rais indulging his every interest, no matter how depraved.

Profligate spending soon saw him selling off assets and mortgaging himself to the hilt. Between 1432 and 1433 he plunged ever deeper into debt. He kept a personal court at his own newly built chapel, the Chapel of the Holy Innocents, said to be more lavish than anything belonging of Charles VII.

A keen patron of the arts, theatre and culture, none of his indulgences were more lavish or ruinous than the theatrical extravaganza *The Mystery Of The Siege Of Orleans*. The production was years in the making and extraordinarily expensive. First performed at Orleans on 8 May 1435 it included almost 20,000 lines of dialogue, employed 140 actors in speaking parts, around 500 extras and around 600 costumes.

The costumes were used only once, being replaced for each and every performance while audiences had unlimited free food and drink supplied by Gilles himself. He was nearly bankrupt by the opening night and his family feared his rampant spending would result in their destitution.

De Rais also had another passion, dark, evil and equally expensive - the occult.

Under the tutelage of Italian priest and alchemist François Prelati, de Rais developed an obsession with the occult, witchcraft, alchemy and Satanism. Alchemy, he thought, might solve his vast and entirely self-inflicted financial woes. Black magic might also provide power and, to a nobleman used to ruling by decree, de Rais probably found that option equally attractive.

The rituals he conducted were both ruinously expensive and utterly unproductive. No matter what he tried or how, de Rais simply couldn't make alchemy work for him. A vicious circle evolved of expensive, unsuccessful rituals and pressure from his creditors. In turn, de Rais performed further expensive rituals that still failed to restore his fortunes.

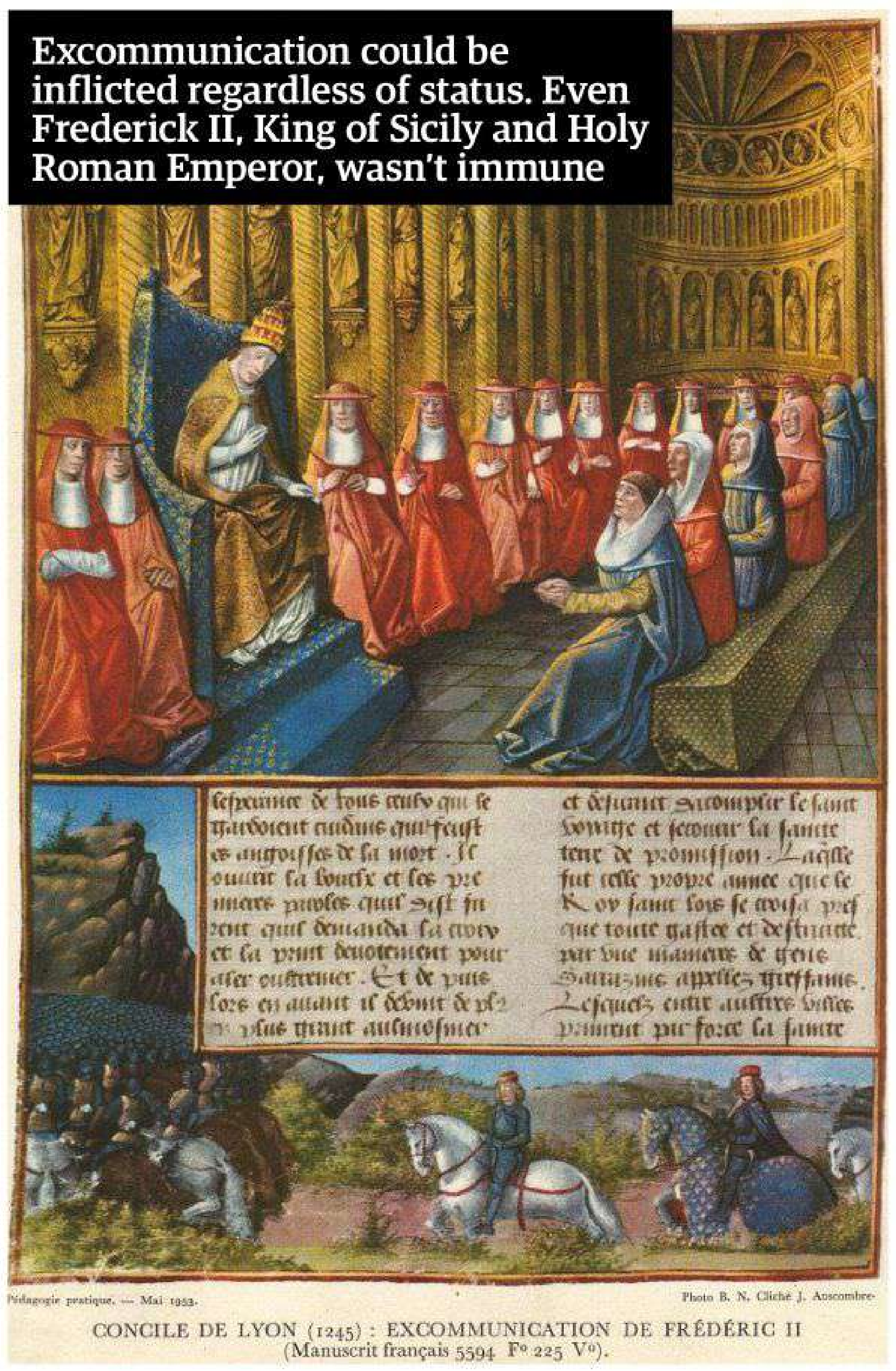
His personality, meanwhile, took on an increasingly dark, twisted nature. Prelati could only offer more rituals and advice on how to attempt them. As de Rais's debts grew ever worse he became ever more desperate to find a solution and Prelati duly obliged. Now he started suggesting the most extreme forms of occultism involving a particularly grisly practice - human sacrifice.

In June 1435, his family intervened. Appealing to Charles VII directly, they secured an order forbidding de Rais to sell or mortgage any more family assets. Charles also forbade any subject to enter into any contract with de Rais governing the sale or mortgage of family property. His remaining assets, those not already sold or mortgaged, were now officially unsaleable. With creditors pressing him harder de Rais promptly left Orleans in the late summer of 1435, abandoning much of his remaining belongings and his home there.

He'd enjoyed the patronage and protection of John VI, the Duke of Brittany, since the beginning

In 1420, de Rais married Catherine de Thouars of Brittany. Their only child, Marie, was born in 1429

The ruined Chateau de Tiffauges where de Rais committed most of his crimes. It's still known as 'Bluebeard's Castle'



Pédagogie pratique. — Mai 1953.
Photo B. N. Cliché J. Anscombre
CONCILE DE LYON (1245) : EXCOMMUNICATION DE FRÉDÉRIC II
(Manuscrit français 5594 F° 225 V°).

Excommunication could be inflicted regardless of status. Even Frederick II, King of Sicily and Holy Roman Emperor, wasn't immune

A fate worse than death

In a time when Christianity reached into almost every facet of people's lives many feared eternal damnation more than death. One step toward damnation was excommunication from the Church. Widely misunderstood today, excommunication doesn't automatically cast souls into Hell and it can be revoked.

If excommunicated a Catholic is still required to observe Mass, but is barred from receiving any of the Holy Sacraments except the Sacrament of Repentance. They're also barred from being employed in any capacity within the Catholic Church itself and, perhaps most frightening for a committed Catholic, are denied a Catholic burial.

Excommunication is reserved for the most serious offences within Catholicism such as apostasy (renouncing the Catholic faith), heresy and physically assaulting a Pope. If the excommunicated person sincerely repents their sin, however, the excommunication can be lifted. Normally it would be lifted by the local Bishop but, for the most serious violations, excommunication can only be lifted by the Pope himself.

Catholic doctrine considers anyone found committing an excommunicable sin to have chosen to leave the Church when they chose to commit the sin. Excommunication isn't an irrevocable, instant form of damnation, it gives the sinner a chance to repent and return to the faith

"De Rais's personality, meanwhile, took on an increasingly dark, twisted nature" of the Breton Wars of Succession in 1431. It was to Brittany (where he believed John would continue protecting him) that he fled. Charles's edict barring him from selling or mortgaging family property either didn't apply within John's fiefdom or John simply didn't enforce it. The Duke's protection, however, wasn't to last.

On 15 May 1540 de Rais finally laid himself open to investigation and arrest. Always desperate for ready cash, in 1538 he had sold a chateau in the village of Saint-Étienne-de-Mar-Morte. The buyer, Geoffrey le Ferron, had entrusted it to his brother Jean, a Roman Catholic priest. De Rais hadn't wanted to make the sale and in 1540 decided to simply take it back.

On 15 May he arrived in the village with around 70 soldiers, broke into the church and abducted Jean le Ferron. The Bishop of Nantes promptly started an investigation into de Rais, discovering far more than anyone had expected. For years children had been vanishing wherever de Rais had been living. The Bishop soon discovered the reason for their disappearance. De Rais had abused, sacrificed and murdered dozens of them, perhaps hundreds, for at least seven years.

Prelati had been promising de Rais could restore his wealth by sacrificing children to a demon he knew as 'Barron.' Whenever rituals were to be performed and victims were needed, de Rais sent henchmen Poitou and Henriet to find them. A local priest named Blanchet also testified that Gilles had asked him to procure victims for him.

Other evidence was equally damning. Children had often arrived at his castle at Machecoul begging for food and immediately vanished. According to their parents this had been happening for seven or eight years, tallying with when de Rais was said to have started his occult rituals. The remains of approximately 40 children were discovered in the building and its grounds.

Believing that de Rais was a mass-murderer, witch, devil-worshipper and occultist was one thing. Proving it, however, would be another. Further complicating things was the protection afforded him by the Duke of Brittany. Also, while Charles VII was unhappy with his former favourite, de Rais hadn't dropped entirely from the King's favour. His accusers would have to move slowly and cautiously.

The Bishop released his report on 29 July 1540. The Duke of Brittany, previously de Rais's ally and protector, now turned on him. Worse followed when, in August, troops from Charles VII's royal army forced entry to one of his few remaining castles and freed the priest Jean le Ferron.

Three weeks after Ferron's rescue, Gilles de Rais and four of his acolytes were finally arrested. The charges were serious, including murder, heresy and sodomy. Murder was a capital crime in the criminal courts. Ecclesiastical courts could impose the death penalty for heresy. To cap it all, the man given the

On both sides of the Hundred Years' War, more people died of diseases like dysentery, typhus and plague than in battle

A different class of death

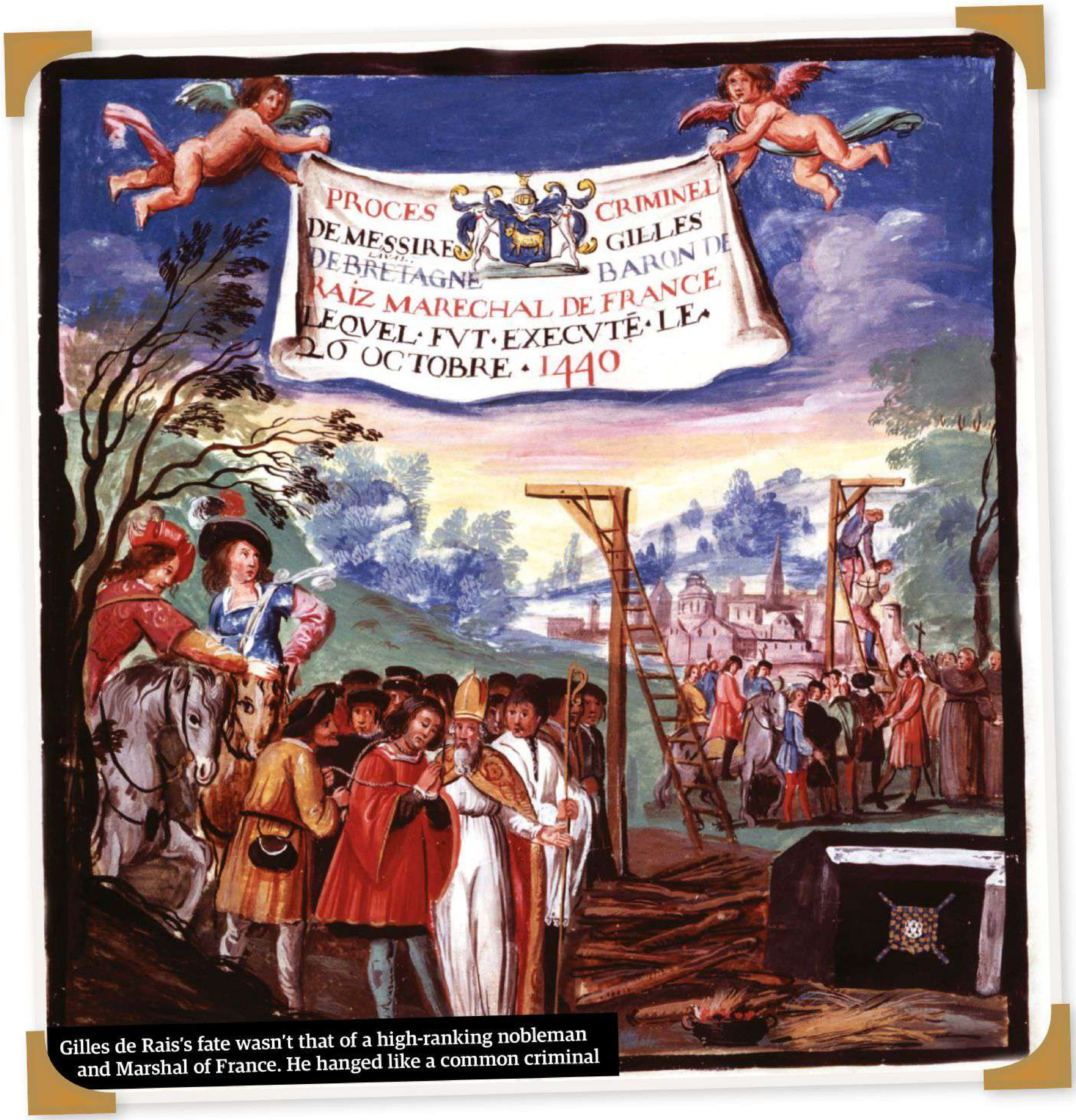
Before 1791 France executed criminals according to social class and crime. Different crimes and social class defined the method of execution in each case. Hanging was the most common method in pre-Revolutionary France. Heretics and arsonists were publicly burned. Also convicted of heresy, Gilles' body was burned but the hangman showed 'mercy' by strangling Gilles before the fire reached him.

Brigands and murderers were broken on the wheel. Tied to a large wheel, their bones were shattered with a metal bar. Deathblows to the neck or heart finished the job. Depending on their crime's severity the executioner could, if he wished, strangle them first. High treason, parricide and regicide merited public dismemberment. Worst of all was reserved for counterfeiting – death by boiling.

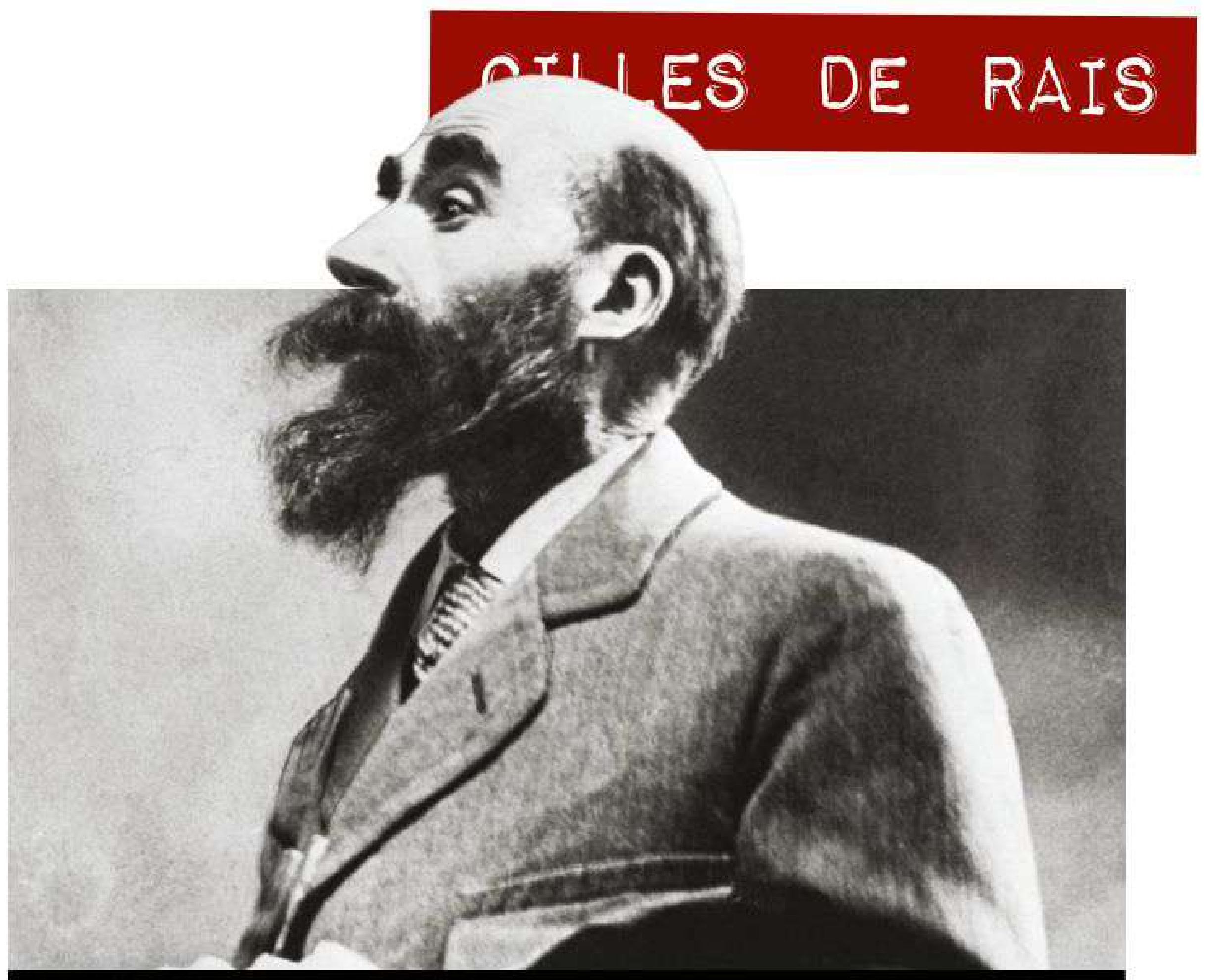
Oil wasn't always available, so water or tallow were normally used. In France the prisoner was usually dunked headfirst. Depending on the crowd's mood, the executioner's whim and possibly a large bribe, their misery could be shortened or lengthened by stoking or dampening the fire.

In 1791 all these gruesome rituals were replaced by the guillotine. As a political statement of equality the 'National Razor' became the only method for all French inmates regardless of crime or class.

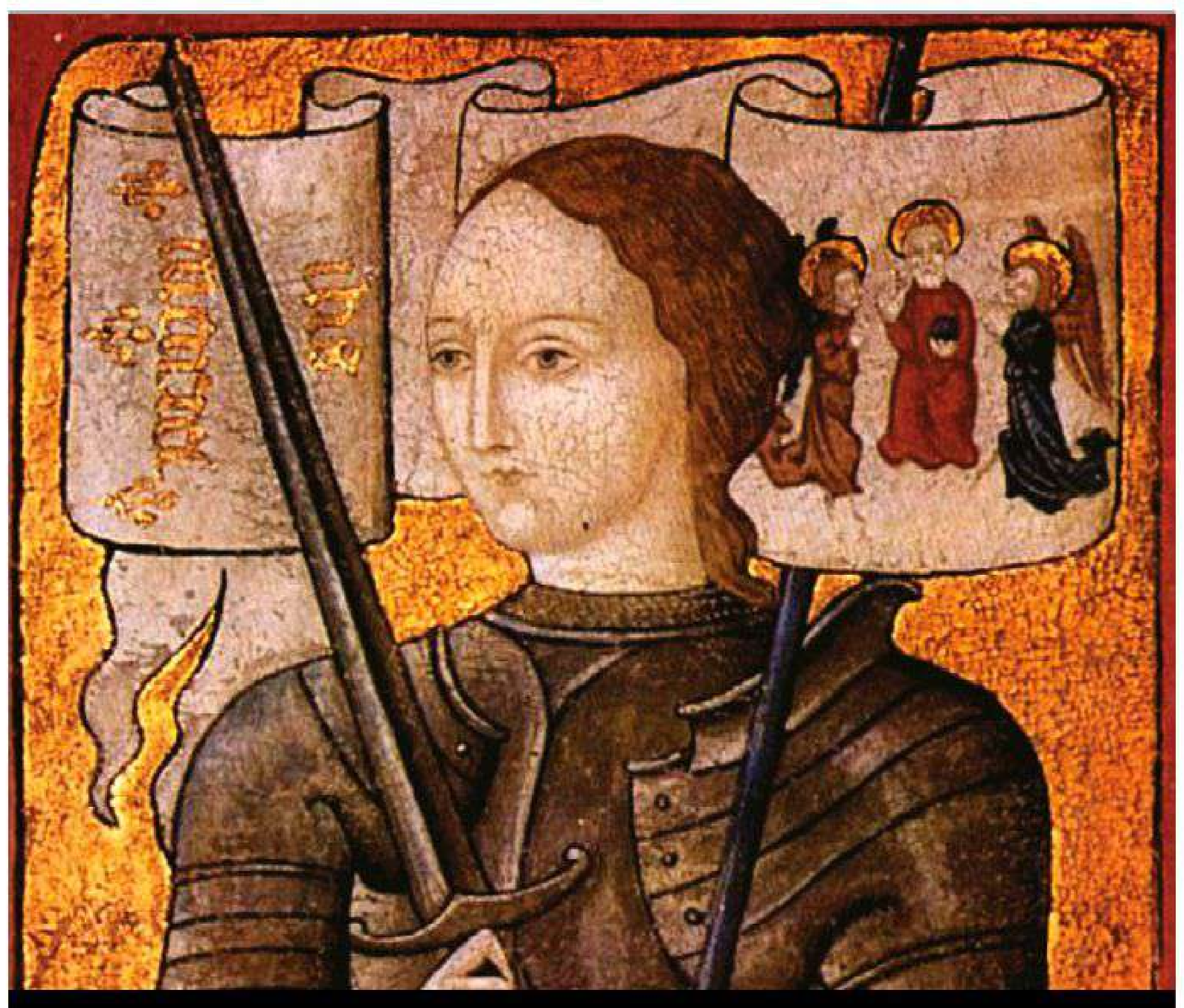
A French 'sword of justice' decorated with a wheel and gallows. Designed only for decapitation, it has a blunted tip



Gilles de Rais's fate wasn't that of a high-ranking nobleman and Marshal of France. He hanged like a common criminal



Henri Landru, guillotined in 1933, is one of several murderers to be nicknamed Bluebeard after Perrault's fairytale. De Rais was the first



Joan of Arc; legendary warrior, friend of Gilles de Rais. Her death is sometimes blamed for de Rais's atrocities

authority to prosecute (and so inherit de Rais's remaining property if he was executed) was none other than former friend and protector the Duke of Brittany. Threatened with torture after initially refusing to confess, de Rais abruptly changed his mind. On 21 October he confessed everything.

Even without his confession the evidence against de Rais was overwhelming. Accomplices Henriet and Poitou had confessed and named him as their leader. Blanchet's testimony on de Rais asking him to procure children proved equally damaging. If any further proof were needed, the discovery of around 40 deceased children at his former home in Machecoul provided it. That proved beyond doubt that many children had been murdered and that de Rais was almost certainly responsible for the crimes.

> The precise number of de Rais's victims is not known, but is generally placed between 80-200

De Rais's confession was staggering in its horror and perversity. Dozens, possibly hundreds of children, mostly young boys, had been abducted, imprisoned, sexually abused and ritually sacrificed. Gilles had even staged a perverse beauty contest displaying some of their severed heads, inviting his inner circle to choose the one they thought prettiest-looking. His depravity truly had no bounds. His testimony was so horrific that the presiding judge ordered some parts be permanently stricken from the record.

While the secular court condemned him for murder, the ecclesiastical court convicted him of heresy. Both would result in the death sentence. The ecclesiastical court also added another punishment, one perhaps more feared by some than death itself - excommunication.

De Rais knew full well that excommunication could spell damnation if he didn't display the appropriate degree of penitence. He also knew displaying penitence just might persuade the Church to lift the order, saving his soul if not his life. Penitent he needed to appear and penitent he duly claimed to be, issuing an emotional plea for redemption before his execution.

As a nobleman and Marshal of France, de Rais might have expected the traditional death reserved for one of noble birth: beheading by the sword. Instead, on 25 October 1440 he was condemned to hang as a common criminal and burn for heresy at the same time. Henriet and Poitou had been condemned to the same fate on 23 October. Their sentences would be carried out on 26 October. The wheels of justice had ground slowly until then. Now they moved into top gear.

His excommunication having been rescinded, de Rais asked that he be executed first and be allowed to take his final confession before execution. His final request was to be buried within the grounds of the Notre-Dame des Carmes monastery in Nantes in consecrated ground. Before his execution he made one final, emotional plea to Henriet and Poitou to die bravely and think only of their own salvation beforehand.

The end came in Nantes at the Île de Biesse at 9am on the morning of 26 October 1440. De Rais went first, he was hanged and his body removed before the flames burned him to ashes. He was duly taken to the monastery and buried quietly. Only a handful of people, described by one source as 'several women of high class,' attended the ceremony. They were probably female relatives.

Poitou and Henriet followed their master's lead in death as they had in life. Unlike de Rais they received no concessions. As they hanged their bodies were also burned. Their ashes were scattered at an undisclosed location, presumably in unconsecrated ground. Gilles de Rais, Baron de Retz, comrade-in-arms of Joan of Arc and Marshal of France, could have been remembered as one of the great figures in French history.

Instead, he's remembered as one of the most evil and his legacy has long out-lived him. Charles Perrault, originator of many folk tales, including *Puss In Boots*, *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding Hood,* is said to have used de Rais as inspiration for 1697's eponymous villain, Bluebeard. Perrault's Bluebeard is a wealthy, powerful man who murders his wives. Bluebeard is also a common nickname for other French serial killers like Henri Landru, Joseph Vacher and Marcel Petiot.

De Rais might well have liked that.

Lady Bluebeard's murder farm

She lured men to her farm and their deaths through personal ads in the newspapers, but how did Belle Gunness evade justice?

She was a Norwegian-American woman who stood somewhere between 1.7 and 1.8 metres tall and weighed more than 88 kilograms; a 'brawny' woman who wore long, plain dresses and was said to have a dour expression that dulled bright talk. She was also a serial killer, and even wrote to one victim: 'When people come to visit me, they never want to go away again'.

Belle Gunness went down in history as America's 'Lady Bluebeard', but she started off life as Brynhild Paulsdatter Størseth, a stonemason's daughter from Norway. She grew up on a farm at Størsetgjerdet, near Innbygda, in the east of the country. The youngest of eight children, Belle lived in relative poverty, but in her teens started work as a servant, living on a larger, wealthier farm. However, she set her sights further. Belle saw one of her sisters, Nellie, emigrate to the US; after three years working on the Norwegian farm, she followed Nellie across the Atlantic, finding work in service.

In her new home of Chicago, Belle met another Norwegian émigré, Mads Sorenson. The couple married on 29 March 1884, when Belle was 24, and within a couple of years, they were running a confectionery store in the city together. The store was not a success, but it was insured; therefore, when it burned down in strange circumstances a matter of months after opening, the insurance payout enabled them to move into a new home.

Belle only employed one man – Ray Lamphere – to help her with chores on her 48-acre Indiana farm

The Sorensons were, outwardly, just another emigrant family hoping to realise the American Dream. They lived in Chicago and soon started a family, with Caroline born in 1896, Myrtle in 1897, Axel in 1898 and Lucy in 1899. They fostered a further child, Jennie. However, Caroline and Axel died of colitis when still infants. Belle was keen on insurance, it seems, and both children's lives had been insured. She duly collected on these premises. These two deaths were not seen as suspicious, but the symptoms of acute colitis are similar to the effects of poison. Suspicions were only aroused in the community when, on 30 July 1900, Belle's husband suddenly died – on the day that two life insurance policies in his name overlapped.

The death was recorded as being from natural causes, as Mads had been treated for an enlarged heart by his doctor, despite another doctor

© Getty

Belle Gunness looked like a typical Edwardian mother - yet she murdered and buried her own children regarding his symptoms as typical of strychnine poisoning, and Belle admitting to giving Mads 'powders' to stop him feeling poorly. She also wasted no time claiming on his insurance policies. The payout was sufficient for Belle to buy her own house, a farmstead in La Porte, Indiana, in 1901. It seems that Belle was motivated by money – and getting as much of it as possible.

By the time Belle had obtained her Indiana farmstead, she had met another man – Norwegian-born widower Peter Gunness. The couple married on April Fool's Day, 1902, in Indiana. Peter's baby daughter died suddenly just a week after the wedding. By the end of the year, Peter was also dead, Belle stating that a sausage-grinding machine had fallen on his head. This bizarre accident led to gossip in the town, especially when Belle claimed several thousand more dollars on her husband's life-insurance policy; and also in the press, which reported a different version of the story: 'A meat axe fell accidentally on his skull with such force as to kill him instantly – only his wife saw the accident. Nasty things were said, but Mrs Gunness was a very pious lady, regular at chapel'. Despite her apparent piety, the neighbours raised doubts about Belle's story, which led the local coroner to announce that Peter Gunness had been murdered.

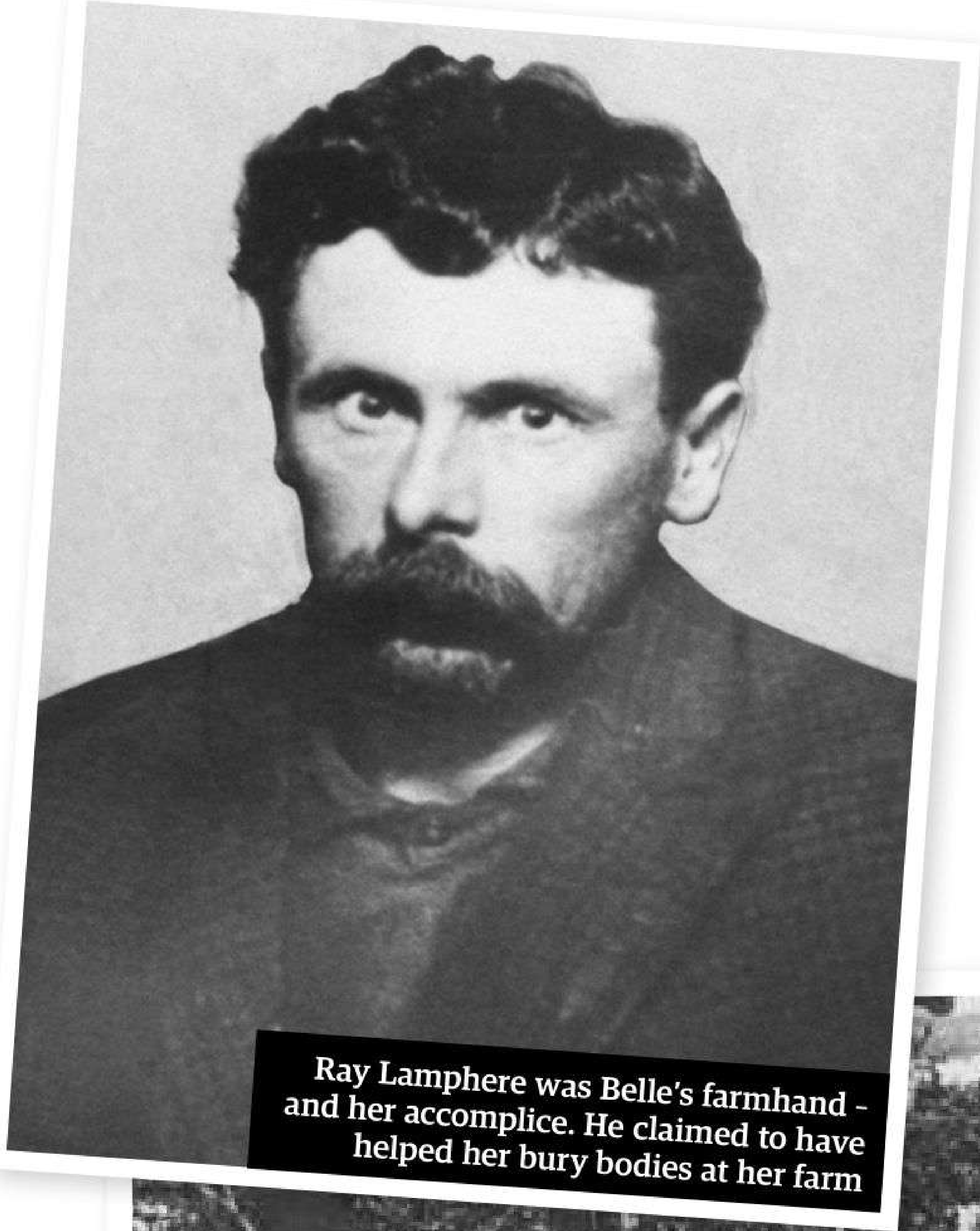
Belle was persuasive, though, and convinced the coroner's jury that she was innocent of any involvement in Peter's death. At this time, Belle was pregnant with Peter's son, giving birth to Phillip five months after Peter's 'accident'. Now twice-widowed, Belle remained on her farm, although foster daughter Jennie had left home; to attend a finishing school in California, Belle told neighbours.

But what was a widowed woman with a large home and plenty of money to do for company? Belle's answer was to place adverts in the marriage columns of the local newspapers. In them, she claimed to be a 'comely widow' living in one of the area's finest districts, wanting to meet a similarly wealthy man. 'Triflers', she warned, 'need not apply'. John Moe, a Minnesotan, duly arrived with a wad of cash – a few days later, however, he disappeared. As time went on, more men arrived at Belle's house, but were never seen leaving. In the meantime, Belle was ordering large trunks to be sent to her house, and spending time digging trenches in her hog pen with a shovel.

Belle's first 'personal-ad' victim, John Moe, was introduced by her to neighbours as 'Cousin John'

Belle's downfall was her farmhand, Ray Lamphere, who helped her with all sorts of jobs, even – it turned out – the most horrible ones. Ray, described as 'a good-looking, well-knit farmhand', was obsessed with his employer, and jealous of the men who answered her marriage adverts. Belle became worried about whether he might turn against her, but her answer was to first sack him, and then report him to the courthouse for insanity. When he was found to be sane, she then reported him for trespass. He started to threaten her; she reported that he was trying to burn her house down. Coincidentally, in April 1908, her house mysteriously burned down. Belle's children were discovered dead in their beds, and in another bed was the body of a headless woman.

Ray Lamphere was arrested and charged with arson, as other officials from the sheriff's and coroner's offices started to investigate the fire. Neighbours disputed that the headless body could be Belle's; it did not resemble her, and was calculated to be the body of a woman around 1.6



Ray Lamphere was Belle's farmhand – and her accomplice. He claimed to have helped her bury bodies at her farm

The scene of the crime: onlookers gather on Belle Gunness's estate in the spring of 1908 metres tall and 64 kilograms in weight – much shorter and lighter than Belle. Yet the body was later identified as Belle's, for a set of teeth found nearby was confirmed as hers.

Now, Joe Maxson, who had been hired by Belle as her farmhand following Lamphere's sacking, told police he had been asked by Belle to fill in various holes in her hog pen to level the ground. Sheriff Albert Smutzer took a group of men to the farm, and they began to dig the grounds. On 3 May 1908, the bodies of Belle's children – Myrtle, 11; Lucy, nine; and Phillip, five – together with that of Belle's foster daughter, Jennie, were found. Soon after, the bodies of seven men, including John Moe, were uncovered. Another 27 men who had a link to Belle, or talked of visiting a rich widow, were also named as possible victims, as well as five unnamed people. As identification methods were not advanced, many human body parts or remains could not be identified, leaving the total number of victims in doubt.

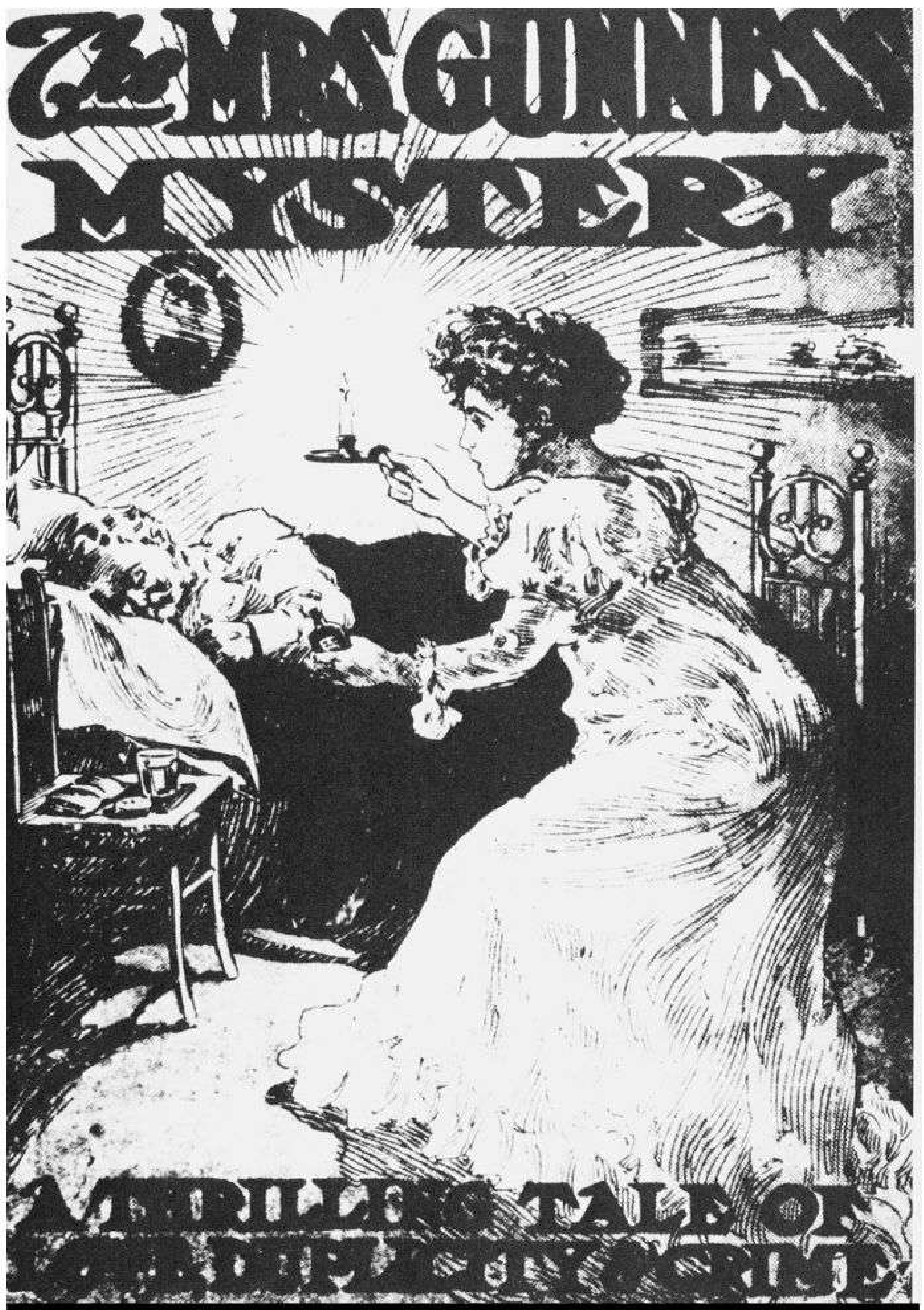
> The farmhouse's shutters were always kept drawn, and Belle enclosed her barn with an 2.4-metre high fence

Ray Lamphere was tried for both murder and arson. Although the jury found him not guilty of murder, on 26 November 1908, he was convicted of arson and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Shortly before his death from tuberculosis in 1909, he told a visiting minister that Belle was still alive, and also spoke of how he helped her bury many of her victims, whom she killed by drugging their coffee before hitting their heads with a meat chopper, or putting chloroform over their faces while they were sleeping. She would then dismember the bodies, before getting Lamphere to help her bury them. Lamphere stated that Belle had killed an unknown woman before decapitating her and throwing the head in a swamp; she then placed the corpse in her house, next to her false teeth, so that it might be identified as her after the fire. She used chloroform to make her children unconscious, smothered them, and made her escape before the house burnt down.

What, then, happened to Belle? She had withdrawn a lot of money from her bank account before the fire (she had accumulated the equivalent of over $6 million in today's money), and appears to have faked her own death in order to start again somewhere. Ray Lamphere claimed to have taken her to a town 12 kilometres from La Porte, from where she could get a train to Chicago. However, she was later spotted in numerous other US cities, from New York to Los Angeles, and over the years, various stories about her appeared. In September 1913, she was erroneously said to have been taken into custody in Indiana; and in July 1930, reports that a wealthy widow living in a Mississippi town was Belle Gunness led to a request from the La Porte sheriff for her to be detained for questioning.

The following year, one of the most compelling stories about her possible new identity emerged in the case of 'Esther Carlson', who poisoned a Norwegian man in 1931. Photographs of this woman were identified as Belle by people who had known her; she was a similar age to Belle, and there was no record of her prior to 1908. Before the mystery could be unravelled, however, Esther Carlson died while awaiting trial. In 1957, another newspaper was still asking the question: 'Did Belle die in that fire?' The truth may never be known.

Belle was an attractive young woman, so it's not difficult to see why men were drawn in by her looks



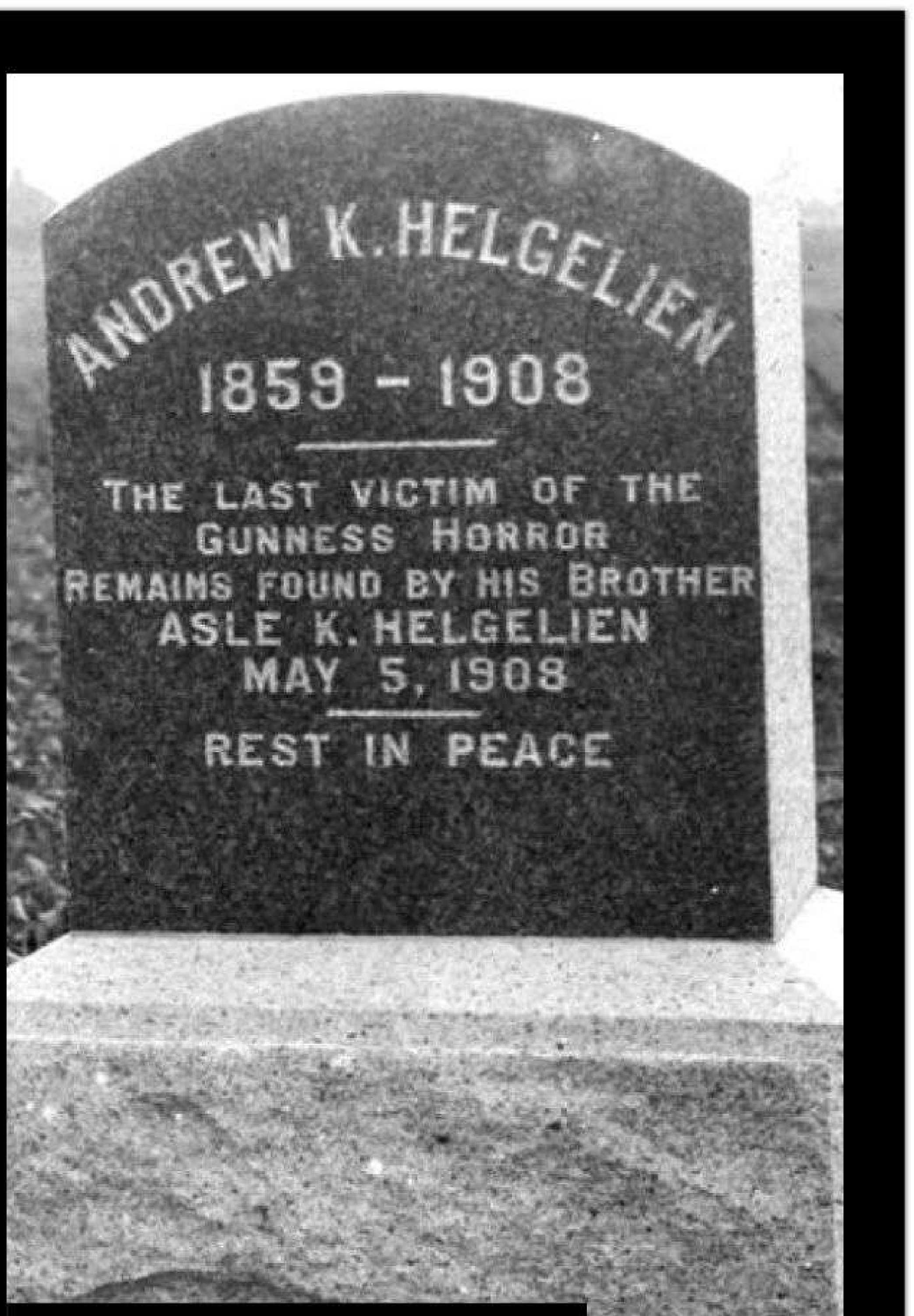
A dime novel cover from 1908, showing a rather romanticised Belle approaching a victim

Her final victim

Andrew Helgelien was killed by Belle – but his brother ensured he would not lie forgotten

Andrew Helgelien, aged 50, is believed to have been Belle's final adult victim. He had seen one of her lonely heart adverts, and after initially contacting her in December 1907, the duo had been exchanging letters. It was the following month that Belle wrote to him with the prophetic words: 'Come prepared to stay forever'. Andrew was persuaded by this to go to La Porte and visit Belle in person – taking with him his savings of nearly $3,000. Like so many before him, he then vanished, never to return home.

However, his brother, Asle, became increasingly suspicious when Andrew failed to return to Aberdeen, South Dakota, and knowing that his brother had been in contact with a wealthy widow in La Porte, he travelled there to look for his sibling. It was now April, and Belle Gunness's farmhouse had just been reduced to embers. Asle insisted that something horrible had happened to Andrew at the farmhouse, and demanded that the sheriff and his team search the grounds. It was his insistence that helped lead to the discovery of the many bodies in the area – including that of his brother. Belle Gunness's former farmhand, Ray Lamphere, was later found to be wearing Andrew's overcoat, a grim reminder of the gory events that had taken place on the La Porte farm.



The headstone of Belle's victim, , at Patten's Cemetery in La Porte, Indiana

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Marcel Petiot Doctor Satan

To escape Nazi persecution, refugees needed to disappear. They thought Marcel Petiot was their saviour, but he was really their nemesis

"For the first time in my life I saw a man leaving Death Row, if not dancing, at least showing perfect calm." – Dr Albert Paul, prosecution witness and witness to Marcel Petiot's execution in 1946.

Marcel Petiot, also known as 'Doctor Satan' and the 'Butcher of Paris, certainly ranks as one of France's worst mass murderers. His crimes were unusual, mercifully so in fact, and were dependent upon a very particular set of social and historical circumstances converging.

Petiot possessed all the usual traits of a serial killer. He was greedy, ruthless, manipulative, pathologically dishonest, amoral and his ends always justified his means. His ends? Wealth and possibly sadism. His means? Embezzlement, fraud, theft, burglary, drug-dealing, illegal abortions and mass murder. Petiot was a classic psychopath.

Possibly up to 200 people, mainly refugees fleeing Nazi persecution, discovered that the hard way. Using their desire to disappear, Nazi bigotry, French patriotism and his own highly plausible personality, Petiot engaged in a killing spree almost unrivalled in French history.

Petiot was born in Auxerre on 17 January 1897. An otherwise unexceptional boy, his criminal tendencies began during his teenage years, a cardinal sign of a psychopathic personality. Expelled from several schools for theft he was diagnosed as mentally unsound on 26 March 1914 when in court for stealing mail. This was only the beginning. One court-appointed psychiatrist described him as, "An abnormal youth suffering from personal and hereditary problems which limit to a large degree his responsibility for his acts."

The psychiatrist was probably wrong. Petiot seemed to understand his own behaviour and the criminal nature thereof. He was probably legally sane and, if so, should have been punished according to the law. It's more likely he didn't or couldn't care, seeing a psychiatric diagnosis as simply another means of avoiding punishment. At the time repeat petty crooks could be (and often were) sent to Devil's Island, so his manipulating a psychiatrist is easily understood.

Petiot's victims could number hundreds. He's still regarded as one of France's worst mass murderers

In July 1915 he was conscripted into an infantry regiment, being wounded and gassed in combat. The Western Front wouldn't have helped his dysfunctional personality. It's also highly likely Petiot discovered he was capable of killing.

Petiot was removed from front-line service several times, serving terms in military detention. Stealing and selling military supplies, dealing drugs stolen from military hospitals and even stealing from his comrades proved lucrative, but risky. Repeatedly stealing comrades' personal belongings,

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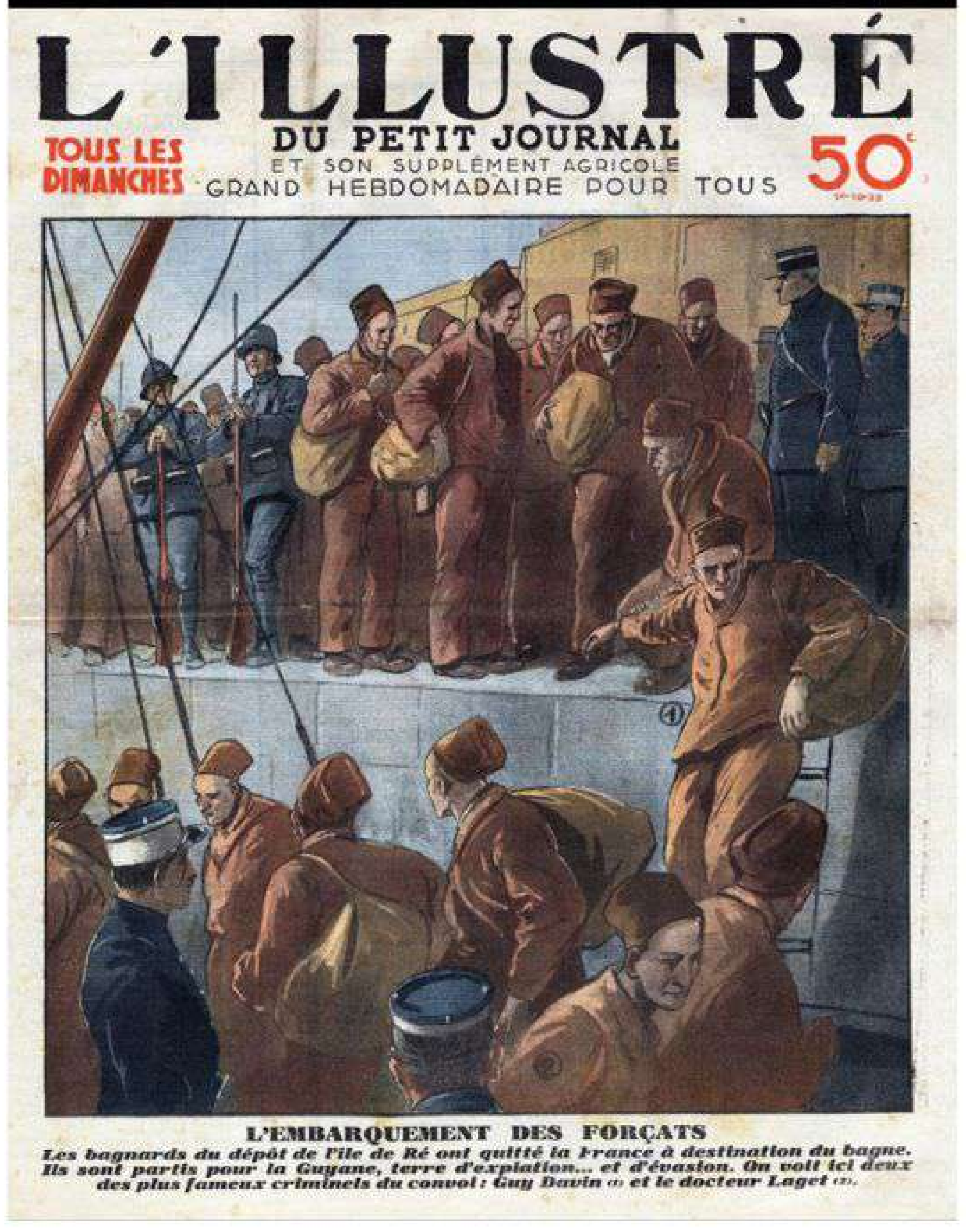
On leaving France inmates became the property of the 'Penal Administration, French Guyana.' Survivors returned in vastly smaller numbers


L'ILLUSTRÉ
DU PETIT JOURNAL
ET SON SUPPLEMENT AGRICOLE
GRAND HEBDOMADAIRE POUR TOUS
TOUS LES DIMANCHES
50

L'EMBARQUEMENT DES FORÇATS

Les bagnards du dépôt de l'île de Ré ont quitté la France à destination du bagne. Ils sont partis pour la Guyane, terre d'expiation... et d'évasion. On voit ici deux des plus fameux criminels du convoi : Guy Davin (1) et le docteur Laget (2).

Devil's Island; Hell on Earth

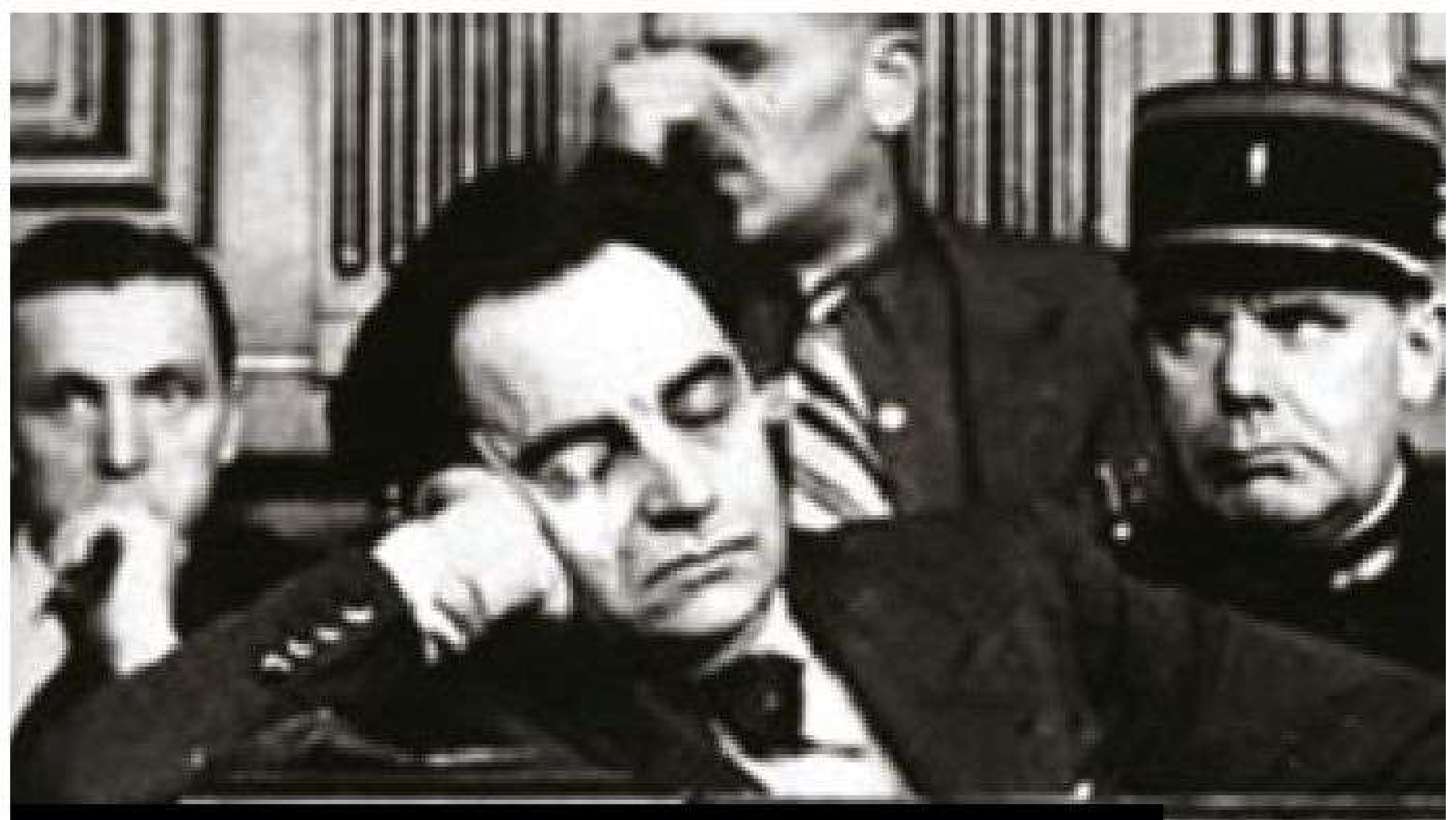
Founded in 1852 under Emperor Napoleon III, no penal facility has a worse reputation. Devil's Island itself only confined political prisoners, holding barely 50 during its career. The Penal Administration, however, comprised dozens of prisons and work camps where inmates lived and usually died in terrible conditions.

Disease, escape, malnutrition, overwork and murder killed around 40 per cent of new prisoners within a year of their arrival. In bad years up to 80 per cent died. Of around 70,000 inmates only around 5,000 survived their sentences and 2,000 returned to France.

Particularly hated was 'le doublage.' Inmates serving eight years or less had to spend an equal period in Guiana as workers or colonists. Inmates serving eight years or more could never return to France.

The most hated people in the system were convicts working as executioners for extra privileges. More than one was murdered by other convicts. Two, named Hespel and Carpentier, were themselves guillotined. Hespel's replacement started by guillotining Hespel himself.

The last transport arrived in 1938, official embarrassment and public disgust having forced its gradual closure although the war delayed that for years. In 1946 individual camps started closing down. By 1952 the feared Penal Administration was finally gone.


Probably knowing his conviction was certain and execution virtually inevitable, Petiot often took naps during his trial

money, gifts and letters saw him removed from his regiment, possibly for his own safety. Military prison was probably preferable to an 'accidental' bullet from his comrades.

Briefly returning to action in June 1918 Petiot escaped the trenches with a self-inflicted wound. In July he was removed again for theft and in September transferred to another regiment. In that time he received two additional psychiatric diagnoses and a disability pension with his medical discharge.

Using his veteran's benefits Petiot entered medical school at the state's expense, graduating in 1922 and entering private practice in the town of Villeneuve-sur-Vonne. It wasn't long before his medical practice became a cover for embezzlement, drug-dealing and illegal abortions. He also started using drugs, feeding his habit with phoney prescriptions issued to non-existent patients.

Petiot's embezzlement scheme was simple. Patients who could afford to pay did so, Petiot pocketing the money. Patients who couldn't pay often had their bills covered by government health schemes. Petiot would bill the schemes for both paying patients and those on benefits, falsifying the paperwork and pocketing the difference. His paying patients didn't know he was also billing the government for their care. The government didn't know he was still billing his patients. It was both lucrative and unlikely to draw serious punishment if he were ever caught.

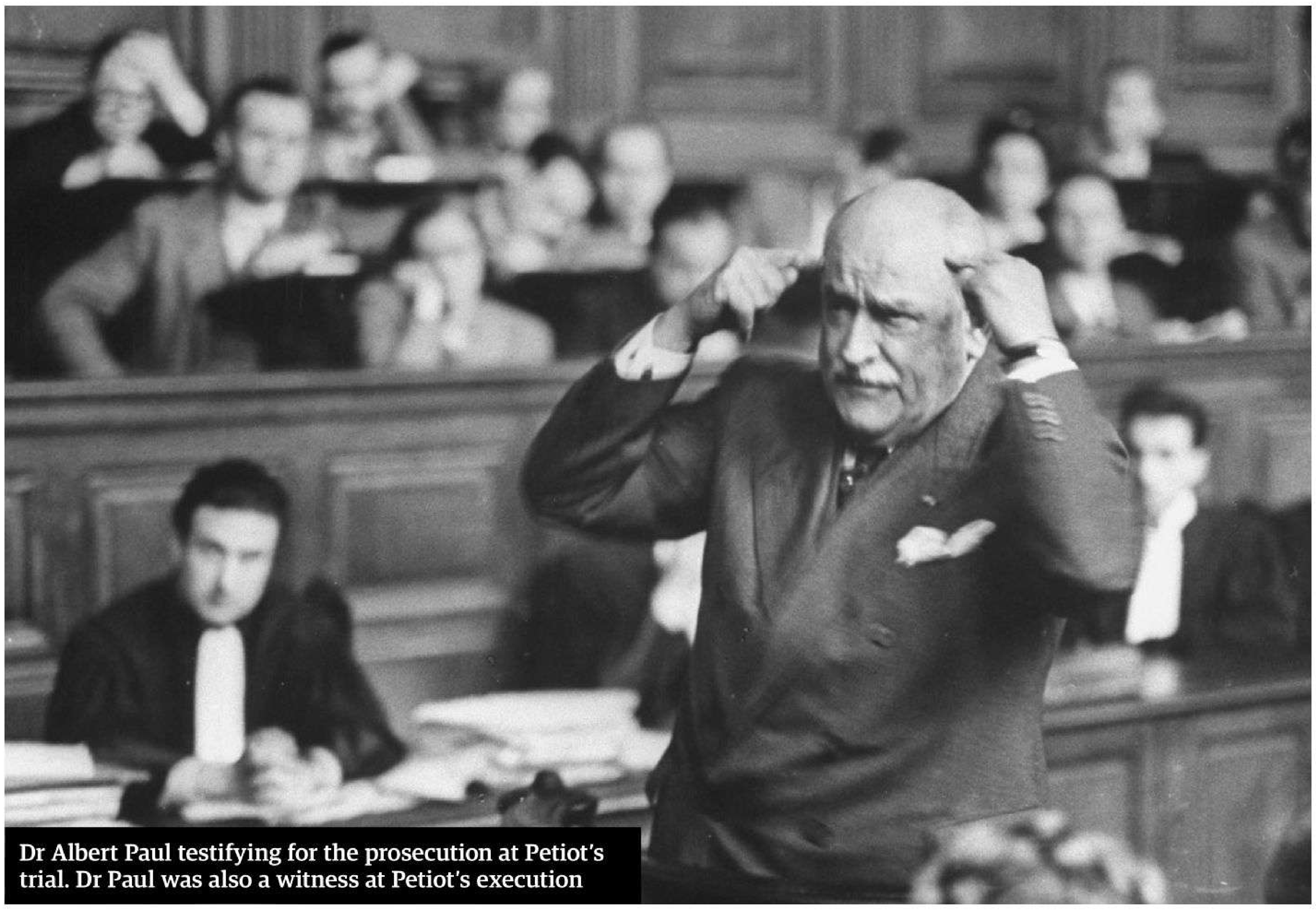
It's possible Petiot committed his first murder at Villeneuve-sur-Vonne. Louise Delavaux was the daughter of an elderly patient. She was also Petiot's lover and vanished in May 1926. A witness later reported seeing Petiot load a large trunk into his car and both the trunk and Delavaux vanished. Police simply dismissed her as just another runaway teenager.

If Petiot did indeed murder her then he got away with it. Psychopaths often live their lives and commit their crimes on a risk-versus-reward basis. Criminal law they regard as something to be evaded and morality simply isn't relevant. Getting away with his first murder would only have encouraged Petiot's darkest tendencies. An outwardly respectable doctor, a professional man in a rural area whose population often deferred to people like him, Petiot only grew bolder. Acquiring social status meant a lot in rural France at the time.

In 1926 Petiot was elected as the town's Mayor. This further bolstered his outwardly respectable image while affording him local influence, something he was quick to exploit. He promptly

If not for the Nazi occupation it's very unlikely Petiot would have operated for so long without being caught

"An outwardly respectable doctor, a professional man in a rural area whose population often deferred to people like him, Petiot only grew bolder"


Dr Albert Paul testifying for the prosecution at Petiot's trial. Dr Paul was also a witness at Petiot's execution

began embezzling public money, was caught and suspended from office.

His second suspected murder took place in 1930, his victim a Monsieur Fiscot. Fiscot had reported his seeing Petiot, Madame Delavaux and the trunk. Petiot offered Fiscot free treatment for a back problem. Probably not coincidentally, Fiscot died. In 1932 he was caught stealing electricity from the town's supply. That didn't concern Petiot. Sensing people's increasing distrust he'd decamped to Paris, starting another dubious medical practice using fake credentials and a false name to hamper any inquiries.

Petiot's deviant behaviour started when he was a teenager, a cardinal sign of a psychopathic personality

Again, allegations of fraud, drug-dealing, drug abuse and illegal abortions arose. Petiot prescribed far more morphine than his patients actually got, keeping the surplus for sale or personal use. He also evaded taxes and sold medically unnecessary prescriptions to drug addicts.

His outward respectabilty and his ability to conceal his dark past paid large dividends. In 1936 he was appointed a 'Medecin d'Etat Civil', similar to a mordern-day coroner. His new-found status only encouraged Petiot further down his deadly path. As a civil doctor he had gained a new and incredibly useful bureaucratic power – the ability to sign death certificates.

The fall of France and subsequent Nazi occupation in 1940 offered Petiot his most profitable scheme yet. The Nazis regularly deported thousands of French citizens for use as forced labour and exemption required a medical certificate. Petiot could easily sign them, for a price.

In July 1942 his drug-dealing became a problem when he was fined a paltry 2,400 Francs for over-prescribing addictive drugs. His unusually light punishment for drug offences can be explained by a very sinister coincidence. Two of Petiot's addicted customers were due to testify against him and could have ensured him a lengthy sentence. They both mysteriously vanished before the case could be heard. By then, however, Petiot's most lucrative scheme was well underway.

Under Nazi rule thousands of people, French and foreigners alike, were trapped in Paris and desperate to escape. Petiot discreetly let it be known he could help them for a price. If they brought all their cash, valuables and worldly possessions to his surgery at 21 Rue Lesueur, he could ensure their disappearance to Argentina (ironically a popular destination for post-war Nazi fugitives). Accomplices René-Gustave Nezondet, Raoul Fourrier and Edmond Pintard discreetly steered any prospective clients to the man they thought would be their saviour. Petiot was actually their murderer.

His victims were perfect for a mass murderer; they actually wanted to disappear. While many serial killers choose victims they believe society is unlikely to notice or care about, Petiot had an unending stream of people desperate to disappear. For 25,000 Francs each and all their possessions, Petiot obliged, just not as they anticipated.

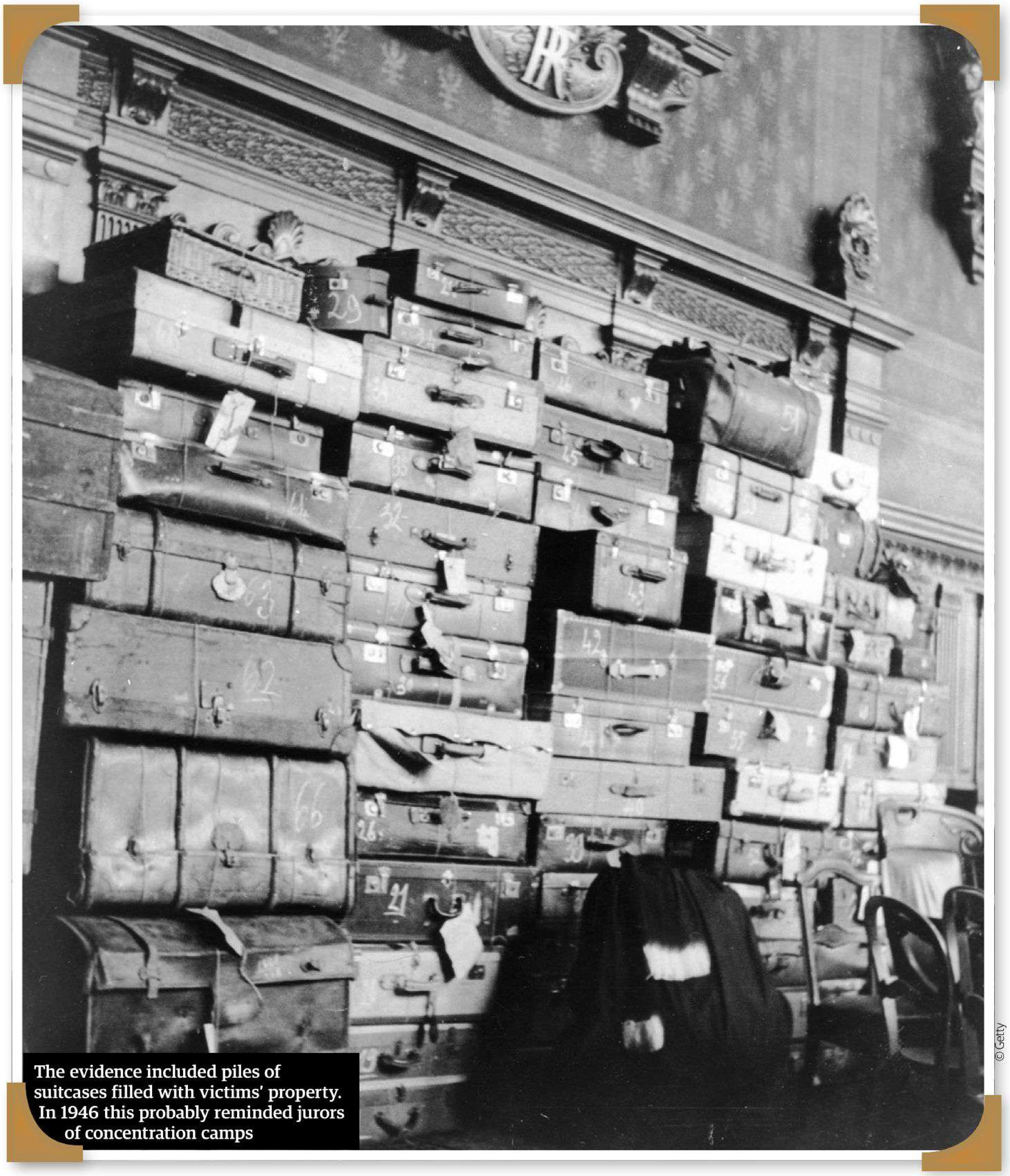
His method was simple. On arrival Petiot collected their money, valuables and clothes, telling them they needed a pre-departure medical examination. He also said the Argentine government required all new arrivals to have inoculations. Petiot's 'inoculations' were usually concentrated cyanide. His other method was a cellar converted into a gas chamber. It was fitted with a spyhole so he could watch them die, if he wished.

Perhaps as many as 200 victims entered his surgery and were never seen again. Early victims were simply dumped in the Seine. Wanting greater concealment, Petiot started incinerating them at his surgery or dissolving them in quicklime.

By April 1943 he'd already killed dozens, but the Gestapo were closing in. They and his victims both believed he was running a 'ratline' helping escaped prisoners and other fugitives.

Petiot's escape was a mixture of duplicity, ruthlessness and bigotry. Gestapo informer Robert Jodkum approached him posing as a desperate refugee. Jodkum promptly disappeared. His replacement Charles Berretta was more successful. Not only did he survive, Berretta had Pintard, Nezondet and Fourrier arrested. They couldn't offer any information on Petiot's non-existent ratline, but under torture they offered plenty on Petiot's actual business.

In May 1943 Petiot was arrested and confined at Fresnes Prison. The Gestapo had taken over one wing, holding prisoners earmarked for 'Sonderbehandlung ('Special Treatment'). He wasn't released until January 1944. In that time he played skilfully on Nazi prejudice, convincing them his victims were actually Jews, escaped prisoners, Resistance fighters and other enemies of the Nazi


The evidence included piles of suitcases filled with victims' property. In 1946 this probably reminded jurors of concentration camps

© Getty

Escape to the Legion

One of Petiot's potential escape routes might have been the Foreign Legion, but for the war. Ironically, the same war allowed Petiot to operate while stopping him joining.

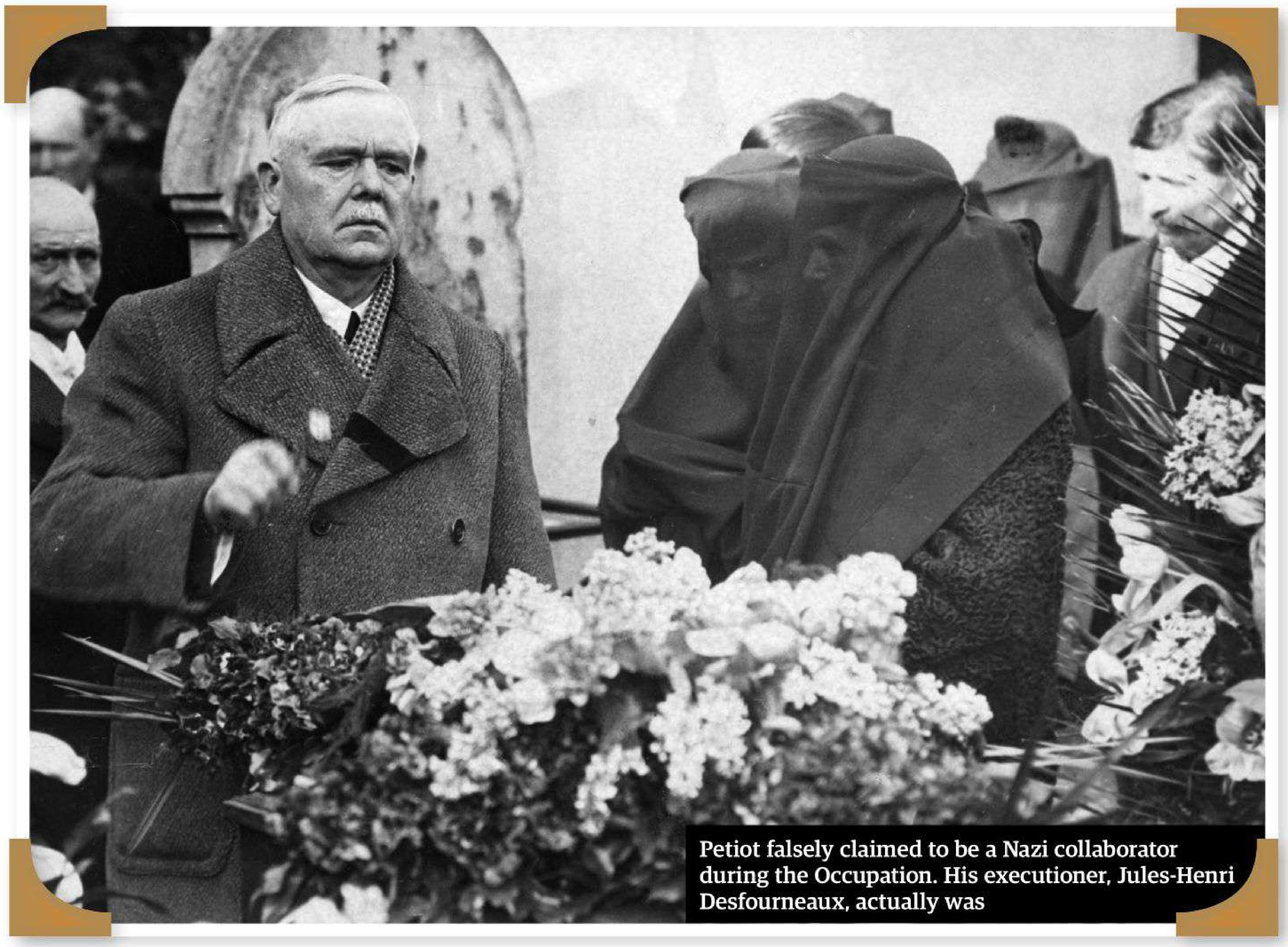
Formed in 1831, the Legion had long given sanctuary to fugitives. Until the late 1950s the Legion didn't care who recruits were, where they came from or why they enlisted. Provided they could march and shoot, the Legion accepted them regardless.

Officially, the only Frenchmen allowed were officers. Unofficially, if recruits claimed to be Belgian or from another French-speaking country, that was good enough. Like the rest of France the Legion was divided by the war. Some units fought for Petain, others for de Gaulle, but all Legionnaires were united by loyalty to the Legion before anything else.

Legion recruits don't swear allegiance to France even today, they swear allegiance to the Legion itself. Despite coming from over 140 countries all recruits are expected to live and die by the motto 'Legio Patria Nostra' meaning 'The Legion is our country.'

The Legion's other motto recalls France's colonial wars. If Legionnaires couldn't keep up on long marches, they were simply left behind. Hence the Legion's unofficial, more widely known motto – 'March or die.'

The Legion is one of the world's most respected fighting units. Petiot might have escaped here, but for the war



Petiot falsely claimed to be a Nazi collaborator during the Occupation. His executioner, Jules-Henri Desfourneaux, actually was

state. Happy to continue letting him do their work for them, the Gestapo released him.

French police, meanwhile, had believed the exact opposite, after Petiot appealed to their patriotism, love of country and that many gendarmes were secretly sympathetic to the Resistance. Petiot told them he was secretly part of the Resistance and killing enemies of France. Robert Jodkum was one, for example.

His liberty didn't last long. On 11 March neighbours complained of black smoke and foul odours coming from his surgery. Firefighters broke in and found Petiot's chamber of horrors. Piles of human remains and stolen property were discovered along with Petiot's home-made gas chamber, but there was no sign of Petiot himself. The bird had already flown.

Even to a population accustomed to horror and mass murder it created a media sensation. The French press couldn't give it enough coverage and it made headlines worldwide. Reporters arrived from as far away as the United States even while the war was still raging in Europe. An international manhunt followed the international headlines, but where was the man now nicknamed 'Doctor Satan' and the 'Butcher of Paris?' How far away was he from facing justice?

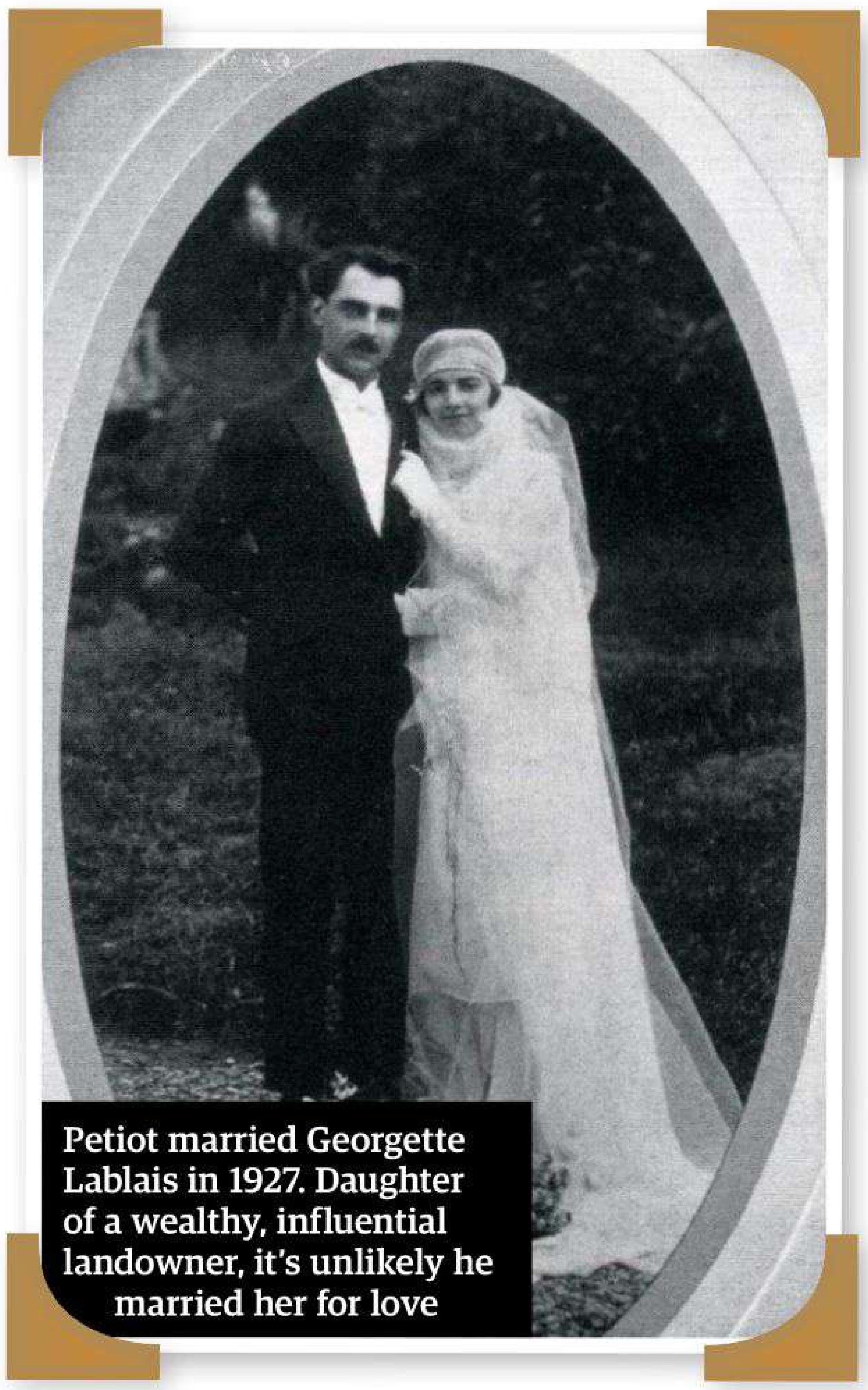
Petiot was closer than most people thought. He'd adopted the alias 'Capitaine Henri Valeri' and joined the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), the official title of the French Resistance. At one point 'Capitaine Valeri' even led a unit searching for Doctor Marcel Petiot, affording him a little protection while probably tickling his macabre sense of humour.

Petiot was finally exposed by an article in the newspaper *Resistance* denouncing him as a mass murderer. Petiot foolishly wrote to René Floriot, defence lawyer from his 1942 drug trial, denouncing the accusations. Unfortunately for him, police compared the letter from 'Capitaine Valeri' with the handwriting of Doctor Petiot. Noting the Paris postmark, they concluded 'Valeri' and Petiot were one and the same and they wouldn't have to look too far to find him.

They were right. On 31 October (Halloween being entirely appropriate) Petiot was recognised at a Paris Metro station. He was immediately arrested carrying a pistol, 31,700 Francs in cash and 50 sets of blank identity documents. Petiot naturally claimed innocence, saying the murders had been committed by members of his non-existent Resistance group. Nobody believed him.

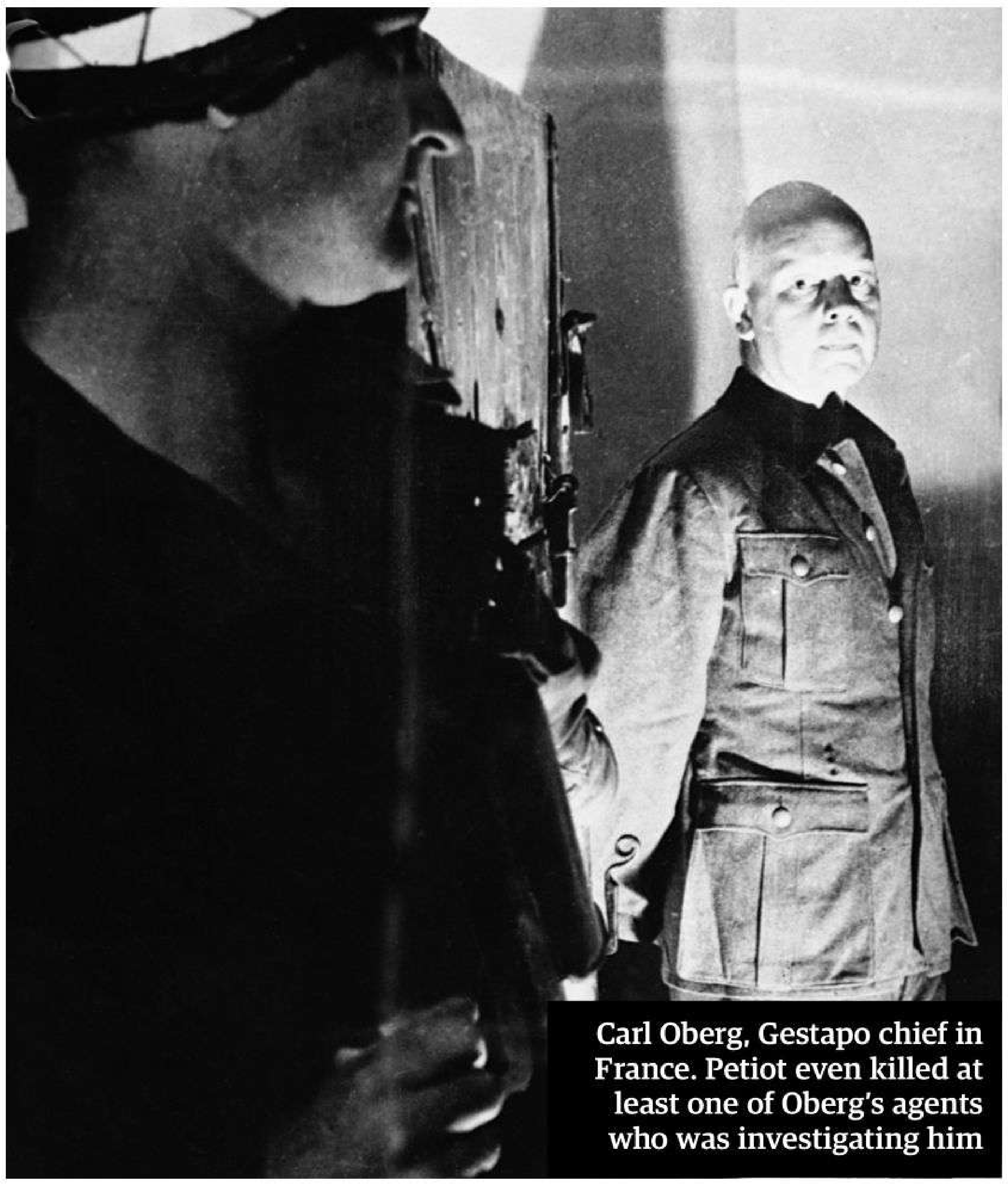
On 19 March 1946, accused of at least 27 counts of murder, Petiot's trial began. Defended by René Floriot, Petiot's prosecution team included State prosecutors assisted by 12 civil lawyers representing some of Petiot's estimated 160 to 200 victims. Floriot's job was both thankless and hopeless. The prosecution case against Petiot was simply overwhelming.

Besides the cases other evidence also reminded the judges, press and public of the camps. Petiot's basement gas chamber, 15 kilograms of charred



Petiot married Georgette Lablais in 1927. Daughter of a wealthy, influential landowner, it's unlikely he married her for love

The 'National Razor' claimed thousands before its final use in 1977. It was finally abolished in 1981



Carl Oberg, Gestapo chief in France. Petiot even killed at least one of Oberg's agents who was investigating him

bones, 2,000 items of clothing, 11 kilograms of charred body parts, five kilograms of human hair, nine severed heads, 16 corpses, three dustbins of unburned body parts and at least ten scalps all proved Petiot was one of the worst criminals in French history.

Some evidence was literally stacked against him – 47 suitcases belonging to his victims were exhibited, piled right behind the defendant. Whenever the judges saw Petiot they saw those suitcases. Newsreels, newspapers and magazines at the time had been full of similar images from the concentration camps where the Nazis had robbed and murdered on an industrial scale. Standing before them was Petiot, accused of running his own extermination operation for personal gain.

Petiot, along with Gilles de Rais and Joseph Vacher, was nicknamed 'Bluebeard' by the French press

In France in 1946 these were enormously powerful images. Memories of Nazi brutality and Vichy connivance still burned brightly. Anyone associated with them could expect harsh justice and very little mercy. The vast majority in France thought Petiot deserved the former, not the latter. They were soon to be satisfied.

Petiot's defence was farcical. Having told the Gestapo that he was a collaborator murdering their enemies, he now claimed to be a Resistance member killing double agents, Nazi collaborators and informers. Referring to anyone who had pledged loyalty to the puppet Vichy regime, he said: "I got my hands dirty, all right, but I didn't soil them by holding them up to swear oaths of allegiance."

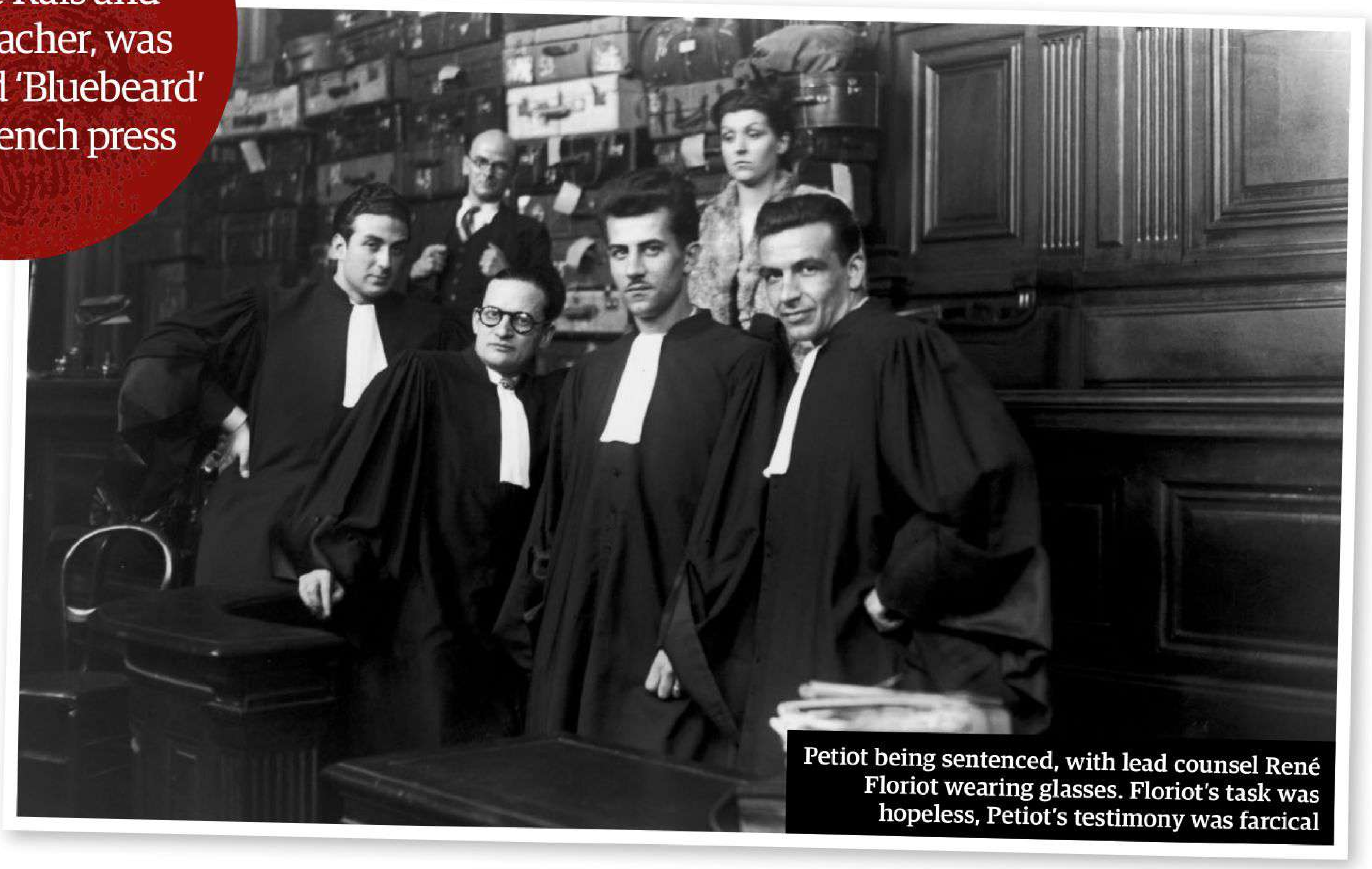
It did Petiot no good. Nobody believed he was a genuine resister and everybody saw through his non-existent Resistance group, not least because there wasn't any evidence beyond Petiot's own claims. He was convicted and condemned on 3 April and his appeal denied on 15 May. On 25 May he calmly walked through La Sante Prison in Paris to face his executioner.

Ironically, while Petiot was never the collaborator he'd once claimed to be, chief executioner Jules-Henri Desfourneaux had been. Inheriting the role after Anatole Deibler died in 1939 (en route to his 400th execution) Desfourneaux worked throughout the occupation in both the Occupied and Vichy zones of wartime France.

Desfourneaux had beheaded numerous Communists and Resistance members including senior resister Marcel Langer. After Langer's execution Desfourneaux's assistants Andre Obrecht, Georges Martin and Georges' brother Robert resigned in protest. Desfourneaux kept going until 1951 when alcoholism and illness got the better of him. He was never officially punished or even reprimanded for his lethal collaboration with the Nazis and their Vichy puppets.

When the time came Petiot was calm, resigned to his fate. Before his death, Petiot's wife Georgette urged him to confess to a priest. Petiot responded simply: "I am not a religious man and my conscience is clear."

Standing before the 'National Razor' – the guillotine – and the official witnesses, Petiot summed up both his criminal life and imminent death with gigantic understatement. Just before the blade fell, he said simply: "Gentlemen, don't look. This won't be very pretty."



Petiot being sentenced, with lead counsel René Floriot wearing glasses. Floriot's task was hopeless, Petiot's testimony was farcical

© Getty

The baby farmer

Amelia Dyer was a respectable, middle-aged, Victorian mother, but behind the ordinary façade was a woman who killed babies for money

It was a crime that scandalised late Victorian society, gave newspaper reporters and court officials much work, and led to a raft of legislation aimed at stopping it. Yet the fact that it occurred, and occurred so often, said much about the state of Victorian society itself. That crime was baby farming.

A baby farmer, usually a woman, was someone who procured a child for money. Their target customers were women who had given birth to illegitimate children, for 19th-century society denounced women who engaged in sex outside of marriage. Both the social stigma of giving birth to an illegitimate child, and in the case of servants, in particular, who faced the prospect of having their employment terminated if their status as an unmarried mother was discovered, with resulting financial problems, could lead to a woman putting her baby 'out to nurse' with another woman, or having them informally fostered or adopted by them. This was especially the case with live-in servants, who might need someone who could look after their child in that carer's home, 24 hours a day.

> Some estimates suggest Amelia Dyer could have been responsible for the deaths of over 300 babies

Some women genuinely wanted proper care for their infants, and sought reliable, responsible women whom they thought would care for the children properly. In other cases, a mother might suspect that when she handed over the child, it would be the last time she saw him or her, for mortality rates were high for babies in Victorian times. But these mortality rates could be made even higher if the baby's carer was more interested in money than child welfare.

These desperate mothers would either give their baby's carer a lump sum to cover future costs – in the 1890s, this fee could be anything from £5 to £200 – or pay them over a period of time. In the case of the former, this sum might be considered too small to cover long-term care of a child. Alternatively, the baby farmer might want to make a larger profit on her occupation. Either way, a baby handed over could die from neglect or from a more concerted effort to kill, within a short period of time, thus freeing the baby farmer up to either take on more children, or spend the money that had already been given to her.

Respectable women

Baby farmers were said to be women who had previously worked as dressmakers, nurses, ladies' maids and servants, who looked clean, tidy and respectable – they did not attract suspicion. Both

Amelia Dyer claimed to have psychiatric issues, and was admitted to Wells Asylum, but later doubt was placed on these assertions

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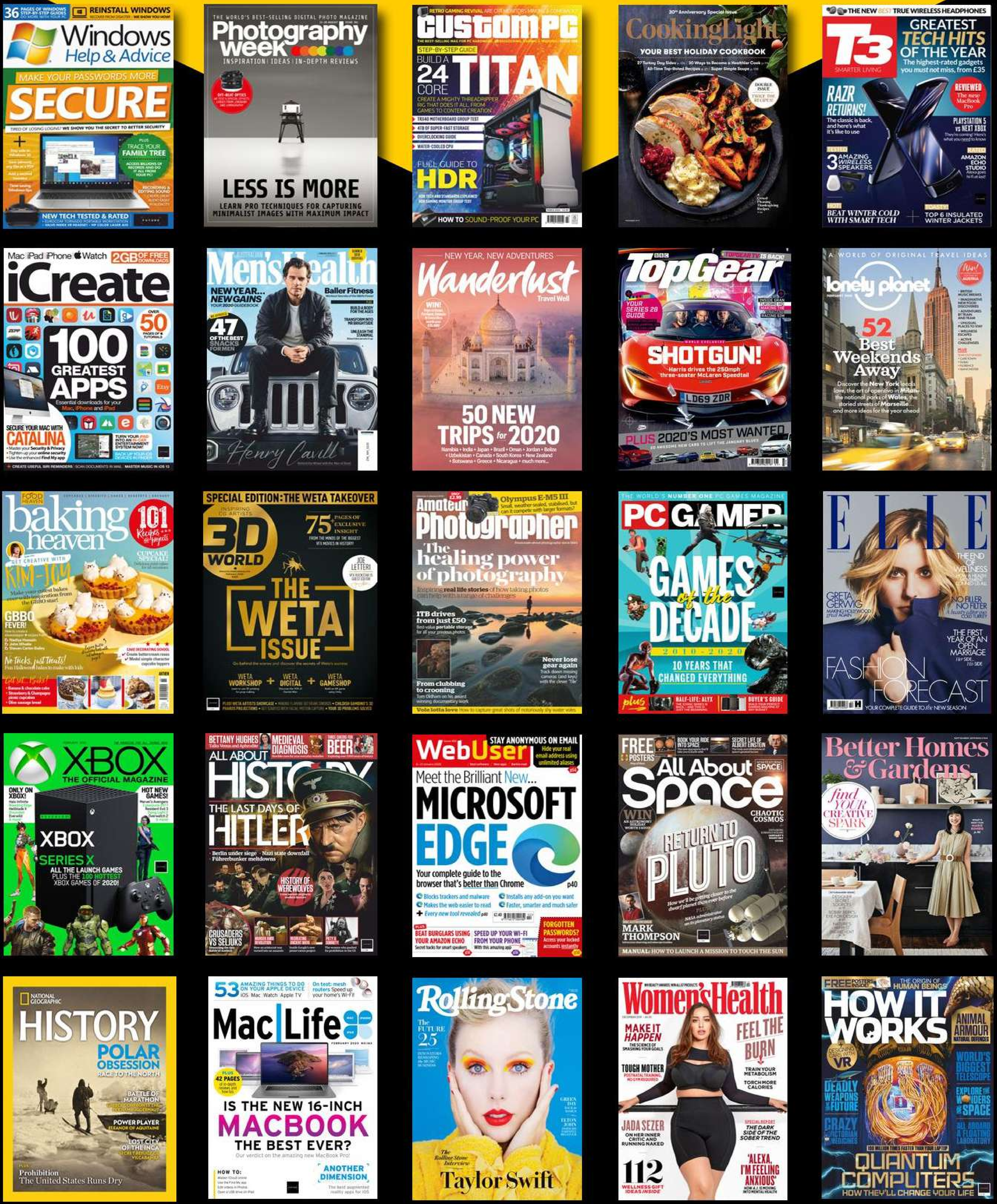


The execution shed at Newgate Prison. Amelia Dyer was hanged at Newgate on 10 June 1896

Amelia Dyer's respectable exterior belied her true nature – a cruel woman who killed the children she was supposed to look after

they, and the mothers seeking care for their children, used the newspaper advertisement as a primary means of communication – it was how mothers sought a new home for their babies, and how baby farmers let people know about their 'services'. The newspaper industry was booming; there was an increasing number of local newspapers aimed at an increasingly literate society. Numerous adverts can be found in the Victorian newspapers that suggest taking on other people's childcare was common. In the 'miscellaneous wants' section of one edition of the *Western Daily Press*, for example, all but one of the adverts related to babies; two placed by individuals seeking to 'adopt a baby', and one asking for 'someone to adopt a friendless baby girl'. Placing an advert ensured that the baby farmer's details were spread as far as possible – although the use of a pseudonym and fake address (or using the newspaper's address as a contact) helped shield those with bad intentions. Other baby farmers would answer adverts placed by desperate mothers looking for a good home for their infant children, such as one advert placed in the *Southern Echo* that read: 'Wanted, immediately, home for baby boy – terms moderate'. Although some adverts placed by those willing to take other people's babies may have been genuine, it would have been hard to tell which were and which weren't (baby farmers were noted for their 'cleverly worded' advertisements), and so mothers in desperate situations had to trust their instincts. One 1863 advert in *The Irish Times*, for example, stated: 'A respectable woman, whose baby is dead, wishes to take a baby to her own home; can be well recommended for her care of children'. This advertiser gave no name, and the local post office as her address for communication – was she genuine, or cynically appealing to other mothers by claiming to be a mourning mother herself?

> In 1907, a Grimsby woman answered an advert offering a home for babies; her baby subsequently went missing

'Nurse' Dyer

What is known, though, is that one of these advertisers in the Victorian newspapers was Mrs Amelia Dyer. A shoemaker's daughter from the Bristol area, Amelia Elizabeth Hobley, as she was born, had seen early tragedy – her mother, who was said to have had mental-health problems, had died when Amelia was just 11 years old. She had been married twice; first to George Thomas, some 30 years her senior, who died in 1869; then again in an unsuccessful marriage to William Dyer, a brewer's labourer. From these two marriages, she had three children: Ellen Thomas; Mary Ann Dyer, who was known as Polly; and William.

Amelia initially trained as a nurse, but a midwife friend soon told her about a way of making money that was less onerous than nursing: by taking in other people's babies. In the 1860s, she opened a 'house of confinement' in the Totterdown area of Bristol. Initially, she simply charged a fee for unmarried women to stay in the house in order to give birth to their babies; but not all the women wanted to keep their offspring. Because coroners were unable at this time to tell whether a baby had been smothered or suffocated, or simply stillborn, an unscrupulous individual, such as Amelia, was perfectly capable of killing the unwanted children in the minutes after their birth, without rousing too much suspicion.

Amelia also started placing adverts in the local newspapers, offering to either adopt children for an upfront fee, or nurse them for a regular weekly

The rope used to hang Amelia Dyer was shown as part of the Museum of London's 2015 Crime Museum Uncovered exhibition

payment. After her advert was answered, Dyer would arrange to meet the child's mother or carer in a location such as a railway station, and take the child from them. She was happy to take the parent's money, but not so happy to continue looking after their child. Instead, she would barely feed them, apart from a regular dose of laudanum – used because it suppressed a baby's hunger and kept it quiet. In 1879, a local doctor became suspicious after being asked to certify a number of infants' death certificates. All the infants had been looked after by Amelia until their premature deaths. She was investigated, charged with neglect, and convicted of the offence, serving six months in prison with hard labour.

Henry and Beatrice Hatchard were charged with manslaughter in 1919 after the baby they were looking after died

From neglect to murder

This spell in prison didn't put Amelia off her lucrative career, and nor did having her own children to look after. She was soon baby farming again, but rather than neglecting her charges until they eventually died, she realised that if she killed them and disposed of their bodies, she would spend less money in terms of maintaining them over a period of time, and avoid the need for doctors' intervention. She now started to kill these defenceless infants, strangling them with a tape tied around their necks, before depositing their bodies. Some may have been buried in the gardens of her various homes; others were thrown into rivers. It's hard to believe that the mothers of these children didn't have an inkling of what Amelia might have planned – infanticide was not an unknown offence by any means, with many unmarried mothers driven to such desperate plights. But by handing their children over to a virtual stranger, they must have known they were doing much the same thing; simply letting someone else do the killing for them, out of their sight, convincing themselves they were not to blame because someone else was the killer, not them.

There was a pause in Amelia's criminal career in the early 1890s, when she was committed to the mental asylum at Wells in Somerset. She claimed to be mentally unstable, as her mother had been, and was subject to several apparent breakdowns throughout her life – although she also seems to have used mental illness to excuse her behaviour, or to remove herself from society when she feared the authorities were about to catch up with her. Her next move, perhaps to disassociate herself from her reputation in the Bristol area, was to relocate to Reading in 1895. It was here where, aged 57, she placed another advert in her former local newspaper, *The Bristol Times*. Using her favoured pseudonym of Harding, she stated that she was part of a childless couple, and wanted to adopt a child for a fee of £10. However, in the same edition of the paper was an advert placed by a desperate mother looking for a 'respectable woman' to look after the child. This was 23-year-

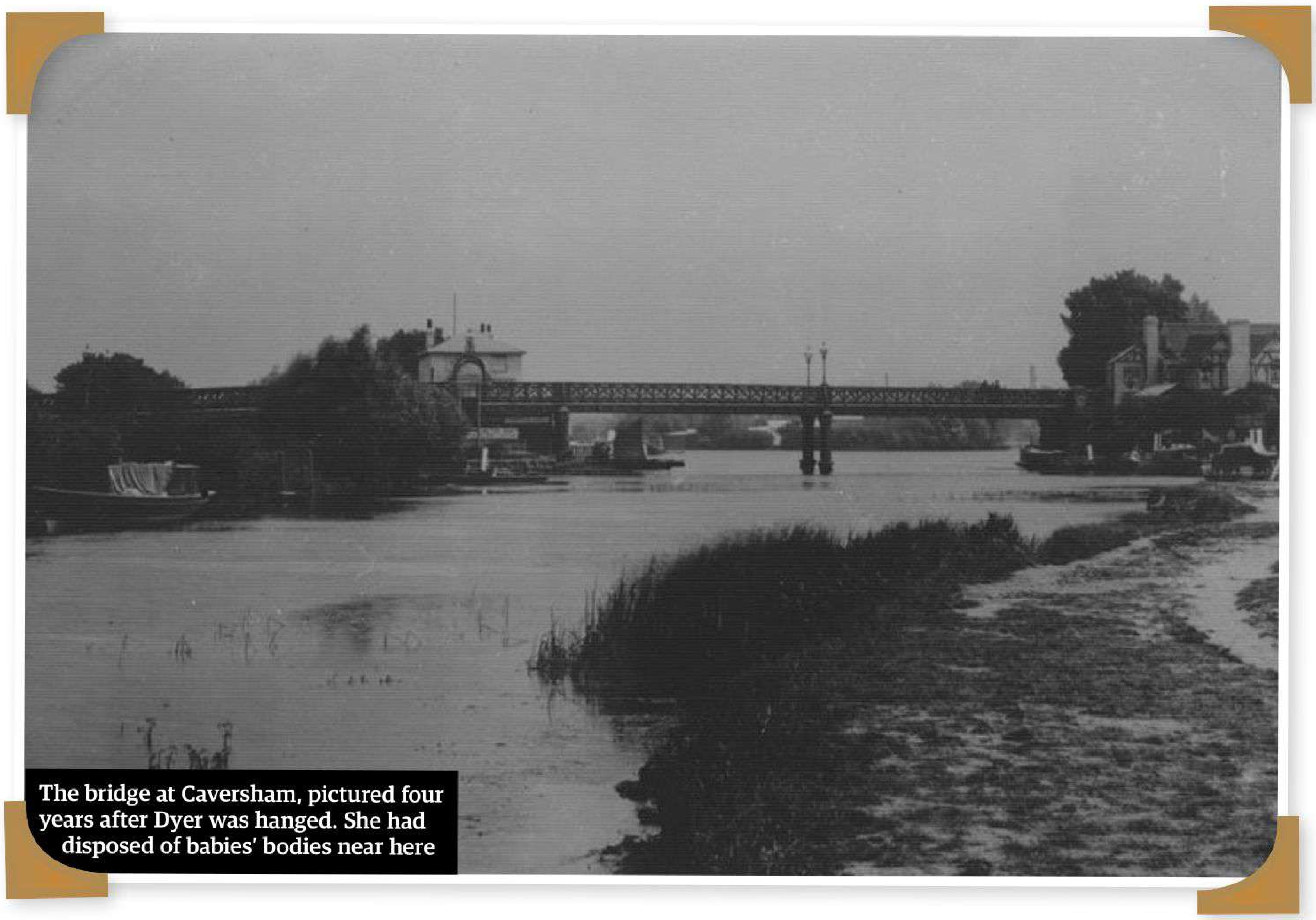
The first half of the 20th century continued to see legislation passed to protect children from the likes of baby farmers

Legislating baby farming

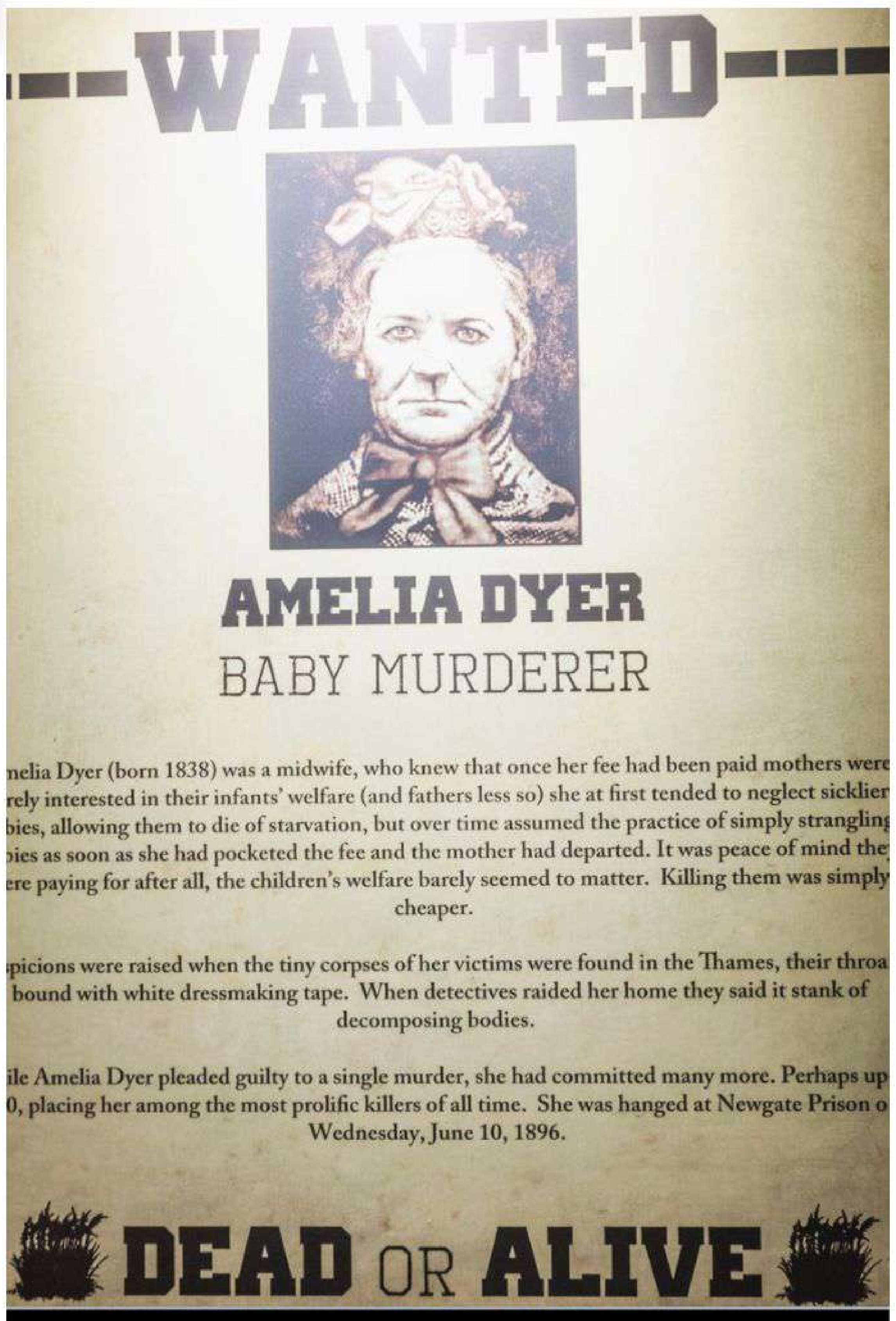
On 1 November 1872, a new act on baby farming came into force in the UK. The Infant Life Protection Act made it more difficult for baby farmers to carry on their work – from now, a register had to be kept by each local authority, and anyone wanting to nurse more than one infant under the age of one, for money, had to register their details.

If a baby farmer was found to have neglected their charges, a first offence was liable to a maximum prison term of six months or a fine of £5. However, unfortunately the act did not apply to any relatives or guardians who had care for infants, nor to public institutions, such as workhouses. Any child who died in a registered house had to have an inquest, unless the coroner was happy with the medical certificate issued on their death.

Although the act sounded like a good move, members of the press warned that unless it was enforced by another authority, it would 'become a dead letter'. Its warnings were apt; Amelia Dyer's offences were committed 14 years after the act came into force, and further acts had to be passed, including the 1908 Children Act and the 1939 Adoption of Children (Regulation) Act.



The bridge at Caversham, pictured four years after Dyer was hanged. She had disposed of babies' bodies near here



AMELIA DYER

BABY MURDERER

nelia Dyer (born 1838) was a midwife, who knew that once her fee had been paid mothers were rely interested in their infants' welfare (and fathers less so) she at first tended to neglect sicklier bies, allowing them to die of starvation, but over time assumed the practice of simply strangling bies as soon as she had pocketed the fee and the mother had departed. It was peace of mind the ere paying for after all, the children's welfare barely seemed to matter. Killing them was simply cheaper.

picions were raised when the tiny corpses of her victims were found in the Thames, their throa bound with white dressmaking tape. When detectives raided her home they said it stank of decomposing bodies.

ile Amelia Dyer pleaded guilty to a single murder, she had committed many more. Perhaps up 0, placing her among the most prolific killers of all time. She was hanged at Newgate Prison o Wednesday, June 10, 1896.

DEAD OR ALIVE

This recreation of a wanted poster featuring Dyer can be found at London's Clink Prison Museum

"A further six little bodies had been found in the Caversham stretch of the Thames"

old Evelina Marmon, an unmarried barmaid who had given birth in January 1896 to a daughter, Doris. As was common, she needed to return to work, and couldn't with an illegitimate baby to care for. Evelina had accordingly placed her advert, but when reading the paper to check it was in there, she saw Amelia's advert, and thought she had found the perfect solution to her problem. She answered 'Mrs Harding', and received a response in which the 'plain, homely' woman stated: 'I don't want the child for money's sake, but for company and home comfort'. Amelia told Evelina how pretty a name her baby had – 'I am sure she ought to be a pretty child' – to flatter the young mother, and claimed that she and her husband were 'dearly fond of children' but had none of their own. This was a lie on both counts, of course. Evelina, though, was fooled by the letter, and the two women arranged to meet at Cheltenham railway station on 31 March at 12.30pm. Here they chatted, before Evelina paid the respectable-looking, even motherly, woman her requested £10 upfront fee. She then handed over baby Doris, clad in a fawn-coloured pelisse, or cloak, and white bonnet for the 'adoption'. This was the last time Evelina would see her daughter.

Amelia Dyer and Jack the Ripper were both active at the same time, leading some to believe they were the same person

Amelia then boarded the 5.20pm train to London, and on arriving at daughter Polly's house in Willesden, proceeded to strangle the baby with some dressmaking tape. In a bid to make even more money from the innocent child, she then packed up Doris's clothes, ready to take to a pawnbroker's the following day. But on that same day, Amelia came home with another child, a little boy named Harry Simmons. He was also strangled – with the same dressmaking tape she had used to kill Doris. On 2 April 1896, Dyer packed both bodies into a carpet bag and made her way to her home in Reading. When she reached Caversham Lock, she threw the bag into the River Thames.

Unmasking a killer

What Amelia didn't know at this point was that while she had been in London, killing Doris and Harry, a bargeman back in Reading had come across a package in brown paper, floating in the river. It had been weighted down, but the weights weren't heavy enough to submerge the parcel, and it had come bobbing back up again. When the parcel was unwrapped, it was found to contain the body of a baby girl named Helena Fry. The paper had writing on it: Temple Meads Station, Bristol, and a name and address, which read: Mrs Thomas of Piggotts Road in Caversham.

Although it seemed there was no Mrs Thomas at that address anymore, a clerk at Reading station told police that Mrs Thomas was now living in Kensington Road. Mrs Thomas was soon unmasked as Amelia Dyer.

Instead of arresting their suspect, police persuaded a young woman to pretend she was another unmarried mother seeking someone to look after her baby. Dyer got in touch to arrange a meeting, this time at her house; but when she opened the door, expecting to find the young woman, she was instead faced with detectives. She was arrested on 4 April 1896, but it wasn't until that month that the bodies of Doris Harmon and Harry Simmons were found in their own watery grave. Amelia later said that the police could tell which dead babies were 'hers', because of the white tape she used to strangle them.

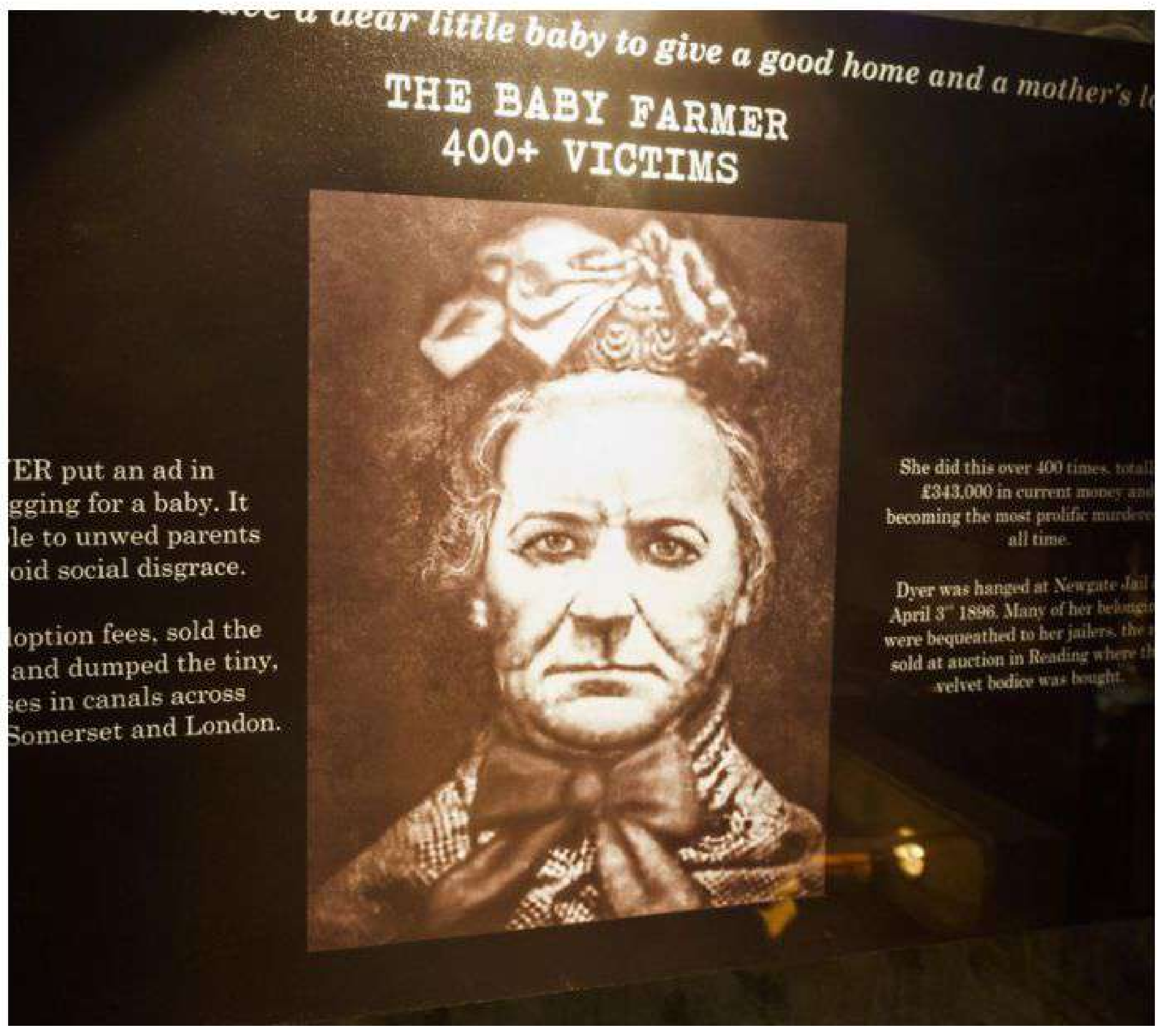
When her home on Kensington Road was searched, police found substantial evidence of Dyer's baby farming. There were tickets from pawnbrokers relating to baby clothes; letters and receipts confirming Dyer's placement of newspaper advertisements seeking the adoption of babies; evidence of at least two aliases used by Dyer; and, perhaps worst of all, a smell of decomposing human flesh emanating from the house, in particular the kitchen pantry and from a trunk stowed away under her own bed. In the meantime, a further six little bodies had been found in the Caversham stretch of the Thames.

Amelia Dyer was tried at the Old Bailey in May 1896, only for the murder of Doris Harmon, although she had been so strongly suspected of killing many more. Amelia's daughter, Polly, and Polly's husband, Arthur Palmer, were suspected of being Amelia's accomplices, because Doris and Harry had both died in their house. Arthur was in fact charged with being an accessory. However, Amelia insisted she had acted alone, and Arthur was duly discharged.

Amelia was convicted of killing baby Doris, the jury only requiring around three minutes to decide on its verdict, and subsequently hanged at Newgate at 9am on 10 June 1896. Due to her weight and age, she only required a short drop from the

Cheltenham Spa

It was at Cheltenham station that Dyer arranged to take Evelina Marmon's baby daughter, Doris


dear little baby to give a good home and a mother's l
THE BABY FARMER
400+ VICTIMS
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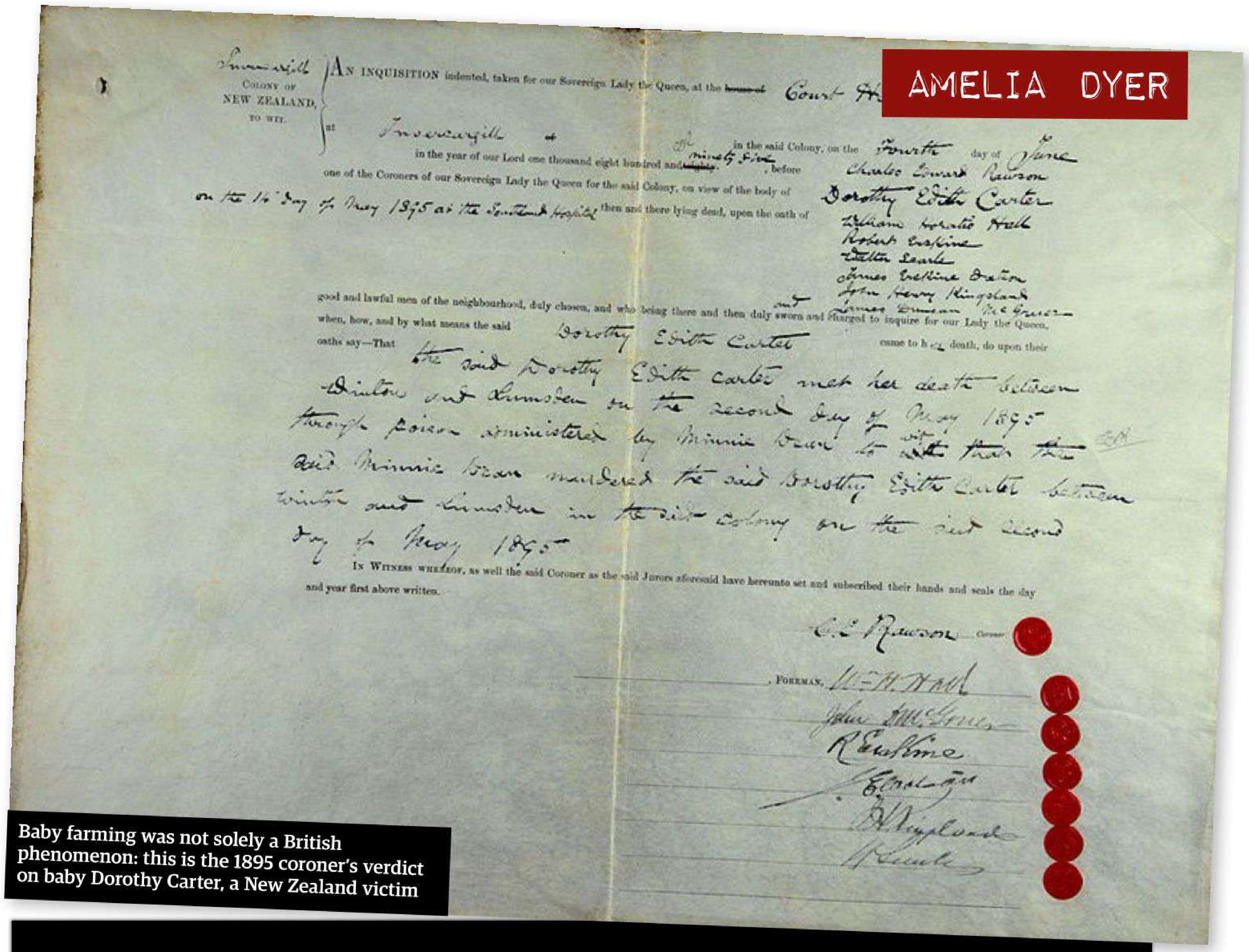
Somerset and London.
She did this over 400 times
£343,000 in current money
becoming the most prolific murdere
all time.
Dyer was hanged at Newgate Jail
April 3rd 1896. Many of her belongi
were bequeathed to her jailers, the
sold at auction in Reading where th
velvet bodice was bought.

scaffold, and so – unlike the deaths of the babies she was entrusted to look after – she died quickly. Immediately before her death, she was asked if she wanted to say anything, but replied: "No, I have nothing whatever to say." After her death was confirmed, a black flag was raised for the onlookers outside Newgate; they greeted it with a faint cheer.

The crimes that had been committed by Dyer were seen as heinous, not just because they involved defenceless infants, but also because of Dyer's age and gender. As the *Daily Mail* described her at the time: 'She looks the typical professional midwife, middle-aged, motherly, rather heavy... Precisely answering to the idea of a respectable middle-aged woman who has always worked for her living but "kept herself nice."' The notion of this respectable mother being paid to kill the unwanted children of other women was particularly abhorrent to Victorian society, and it was quite clear that earlier attempts to clean up the baby-farming industry had completely failed. Further cases involving female baby farmers being tried for murder would follow over the following few years, not just in Britain but across the Channel too, including the German baby farmer Frau Wiese, who was guillotined at Hamburg in 1905 after being convicted of murdering five children in her care. Authorities were on the alert, however, and in Britain, the NSPCC undertook a number of prosecutions, including that of Emma Hooper, a 51-year-old widow, in 1904, who was found guilty of cruelty and neglect towards two of the children she was supposedly 'looking after'. The lucrative days of the baby farmer were, by this time, on the wane – although cases continued to be heard in court for some time to come.



Invercargill
COLONY OF
NEW ZEALAND,
TO WIT.

AN INQUISITION indented, taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen, at the ~~house of~~ Court H at Invercargill in the said Colony, on the Fourth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ~~eighty~~ ninety five, before Charles Edward Rawson one of the Coroners of our Sovereign Lady the Queen for the said Colony, on view of the body of Dorothy Edith Carter on the 14 day of May 1895 at the Southland Hospital then and there lying dead, upon the oath of William Horatio Hall, Robert Erskine, Walter Searle, James Erskine Dalton, John Henry Kingsland, James Duncan McGruer good and lawful men of the neighbourhood, duly chosen, and who being there and then duly sworn and charged to inquire for our Lady the Queen, when, how, and by what means the said Dorothy Edith Carter came to her death, do upon their oaths say—That the said Dorothy Edith Carter met her death between Winton and Lumsden on the second day of May 1895 through poison administered by Minnie Dean to wit that the said Minnie Dean murdered the said Dorothy Edith Carter between Winton and Lumsden in the said Colony on the said second day of May 1895

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, as well the said Coroner as the said Jurors aforesaid have hereunto set and subscribed their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

C. E. Rawson Coroner

FOREMAN, W. H. Hall
John D McGruer
R Erskine
J H Kingsland

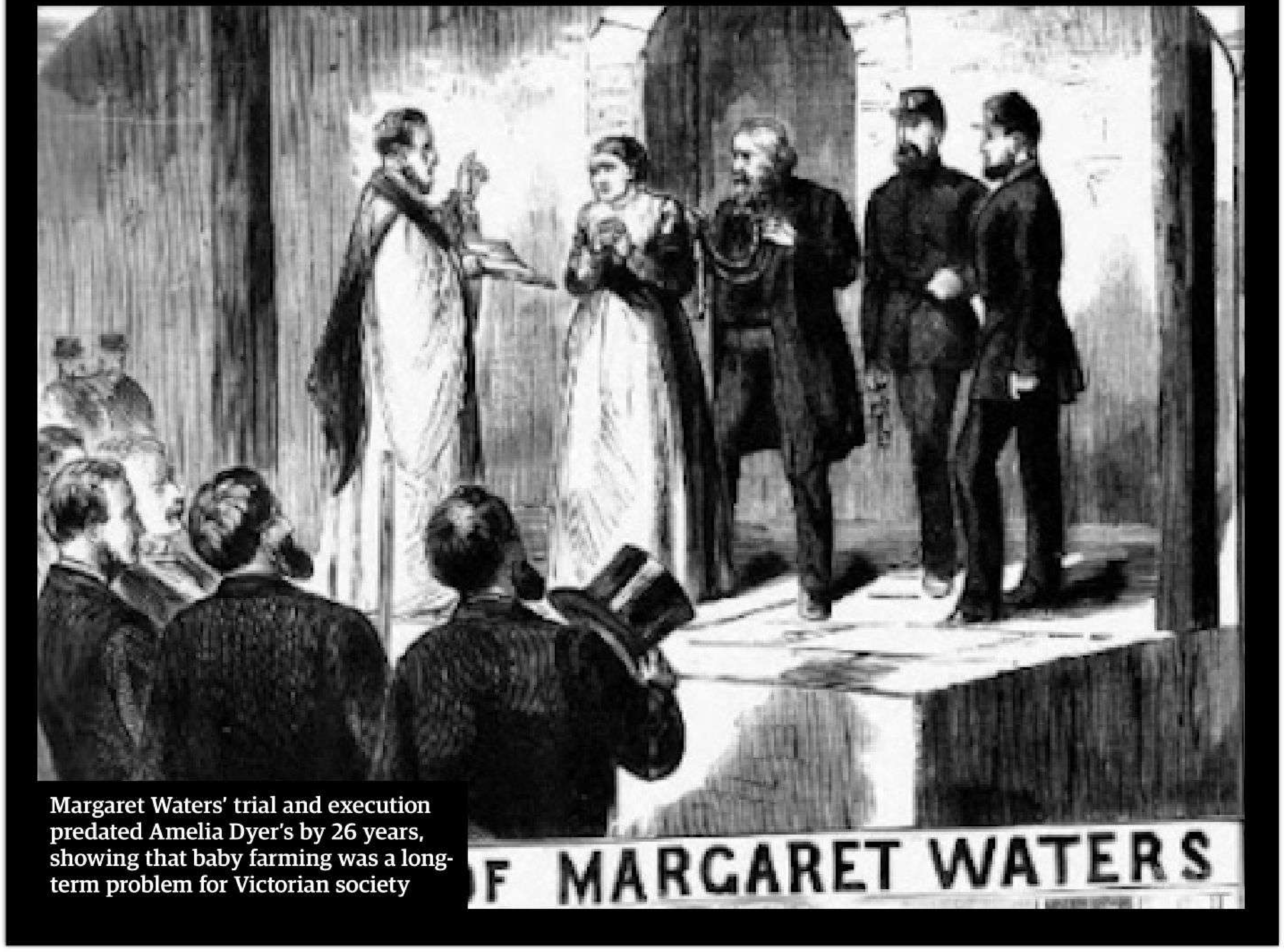
Baby farming was not solely a British phenomenon: this is the 1895 coroner's verdict on baby Dorothy Carter, a New Zealand victim

The Brixton baby farmer

Margaret Waters' offences predated Dyer's by two decades

A quarter of a century before Amelia Dyer was convicted of murder and hanged, Margaret Waters had been similarly accused. It was Waters' offences that led to the passing of the 1872 legislation aimed at registering those with the case of infants.

Margaret Waters was 35, a widow, and lived in Brixton. She was known to be a baby farmer, regularly taking in other women's children for a fee. But she was no child lover, and once the children were in her home, she treated them terribly, drugging them and starving them until they died. She was eventually charged with five counts of wilful murder, with neglect, and with conspiracy; her sister, Sarah Ellis, was in the dock with her, charged with neglecting to provide proper food for the children. Margaret was convicted of one count, that of murdering an illegitimate child, John Walter Cowen, although she was suspected of having killed at least 19. The judge at her trial said that the law had "taken up the cause of the poor helpless and innocent children" who Waters had so failed to look after. She was hanged by William Calcraft at Horsemonger Lane Gaol in south London on 11 October 1870.


F MARGARET WATERS

Margaret Waters' trial and execution predated Amelia Dyer's by 26 years, showing that baby farming was a long-term problem for Victorian society

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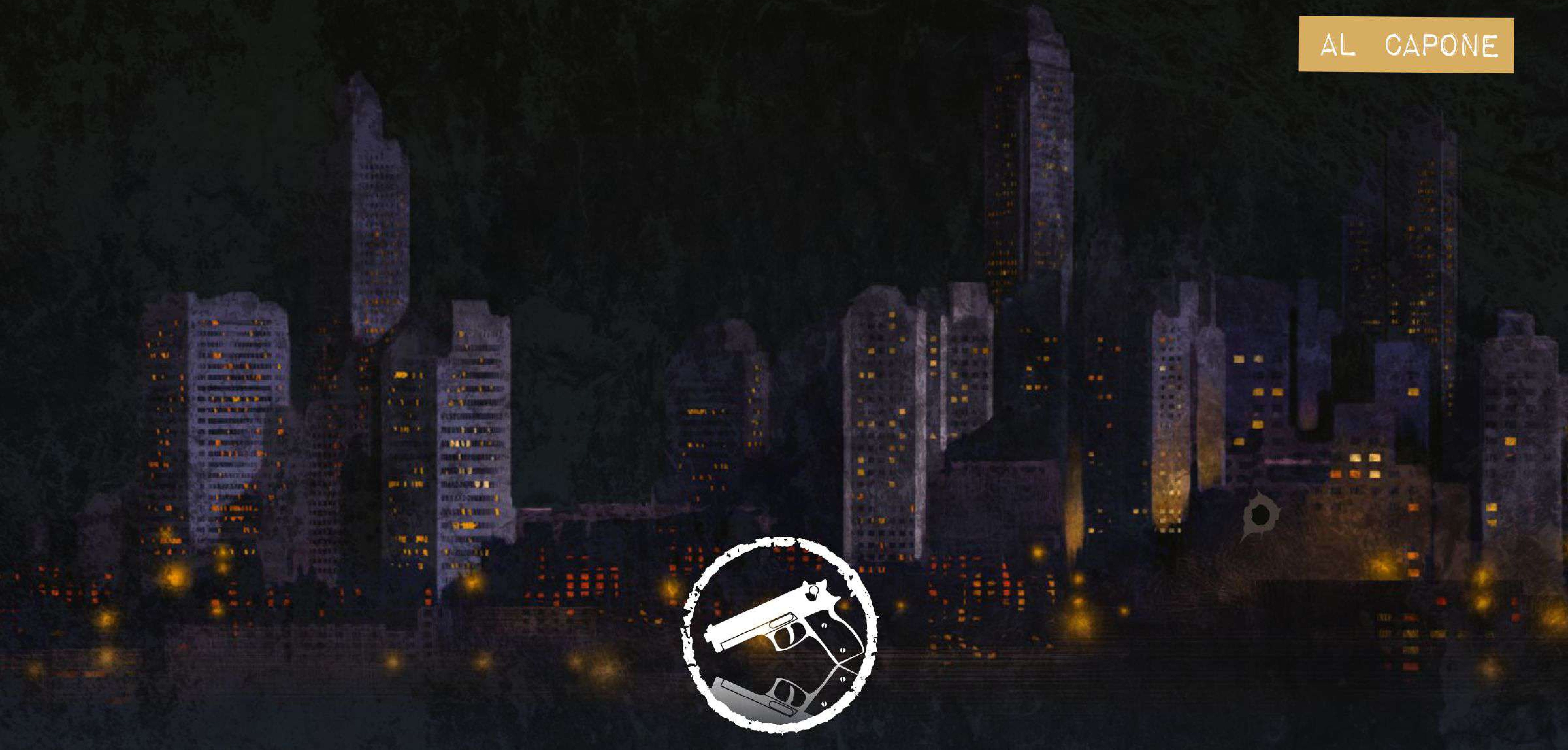
JAZZ
DANCING
CHALMERS



Al Capone

Arriving in Chicago as a minor league mobster, Al Capone helped build an empire of prostitution, bootlegging and murder that made him a notorious household name

The needle skipped as the gun barked twice in the killer's hand, the record player screeching into the silence of the restaurant's corridor as its owner crashed to the floor, blood pooling out onto the polished tiles.

Giacomo 'Big Jim' Colosimo, his body cooling from its exit wounds, had recently left his wife, filing for divorce and skipping town to marry a 19-year-old cabaret singer. His ex-wife, Victoria Moresco, or one of her brothers, was the prime suspect in this crime of passion, but the police knew enough to pay a visit to two of Colosimo's associates – the genial Johnny Torrio and his sidekick, the disquieting Alfonse Capone, three nasty scars on his cheek contorting as he smiled. "Big Jim and me were like brothers," claimed Torrio. "Mr Colosimo and me both loved opera", added Capone. "He was a grand guy."

Colosimo's murder on 11 May 1920 is still regarded as unsolved, but perhaps it's a crime that Chicago Police Department chose to leave that way. For nearly a decade Colosimo had ruled Chicago through hard graft and intimidation – running over 100 brothels with his wife – and extorting protection money from most of the city's illegal gambling dens, the profits snaking through the entire city, supplementing the meagre wages of the cop on the street corner and boosting the bank account of the city's two-time mayor, William 'Big Bill' Hale Thompson.

Chicago was a rough town. Booming in the early 1920s thanks to heavy industry and cheap labour, the Windy City was a Wild West frontier town with chimney stacks instead of cacti and bullet-riddled Model-T Fords in lieu of horses. "She was vibrant and violent," wrote local journalist Robert St John, "stimulating and ruthless, intolerant of smugness, impatient with those either physically or intellectually timid."

Capone had arrived in Chicago from New York in 1919 to work for his old friend Torrio, who had earned Colosimo's trust by chasing off a rival extortion racket and stuck around as the boss's second in command. Capone soon put the feared reputation he had enjoyed back home to work as a debt collector, seeing first hand how Colosimo's operation held a stranglehold over the underworld; gambling dens who refused to pay up for Big Jim's protection would either find themselves the subject of a convenient police raid or a visit from Capone, who was more than happy to break a few legs with a swing from his baseball bat.

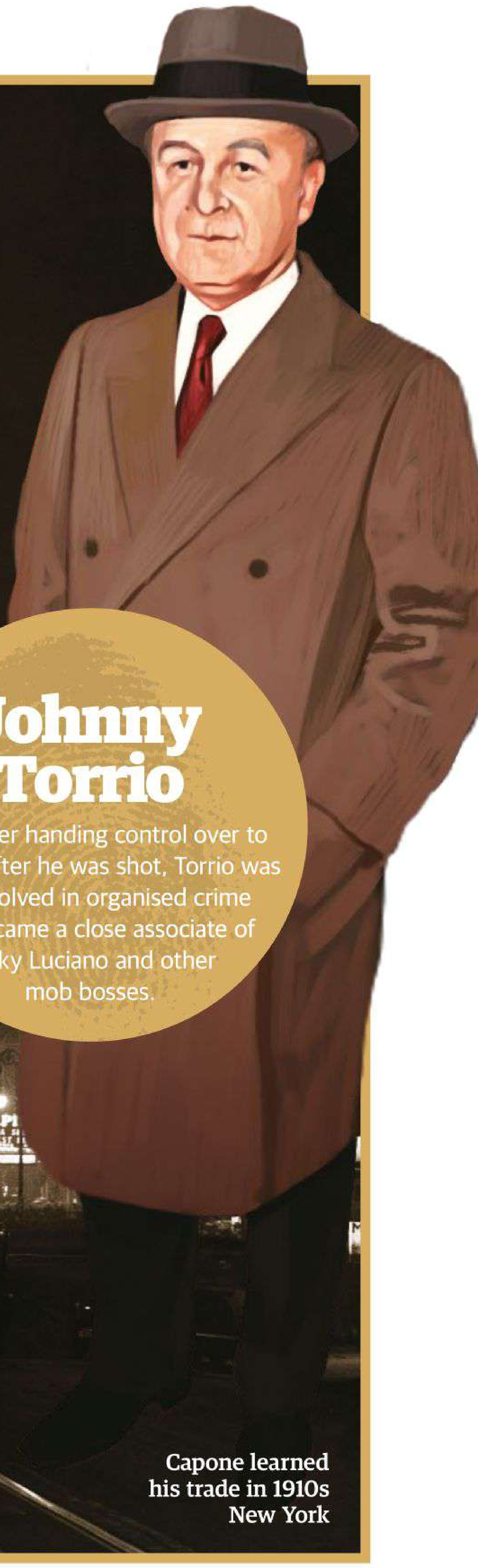
Capone in New York

Born in 1898 in a run-down district of Brooklyn to Italian immigrants Gabriele and Teresina Capone, Al Capone's life of crime began early, brawling with street gangs and running errands for mobsters. One, a young rising star called Johnny Torrio, would loom larger in his life later on.

Capone soon found work with Frankie Yale (born Francesco Ioele), a vicious thug with links to Torrio. Working as a barman in Yale's bar, the Harvard Inn – a notorious haunt of prostitutes and gangsters – Capone got the vicious scars on his face when he leered at one mobster's sister "Honey, you got a nice ass and I mean that as a compliment, believe me." The furious Frank Galluccio called Capone out and slashed him three times across his cheek with a knife. He needed 30 stitches, but he was lucky the hoodlum had been drinking because Galluccio was aiming for his jugular. In the bar he also picked up syphilis, which eventually caused his death, but may have affected him even earlier. Neurosyphilis attacks the brain and the spinal column, and can cause violent mood swings, delusions and megalomania.

BILLIARDS
JAZZ
DANCING
CHALMERS
WARNERS
WARNERS
AL JOLSON
JAZZ SINGER
ROSELAND
ARTISTS AND MODELS
RIVOLI
BROADWAY

Capone learned his trade in 1910s New York



Johnny Torrio

Even after handing control over to Capone after he was shot, Torrio was still involved in organised crime and became a close associate of Lucky Luciano and other mob bosses.

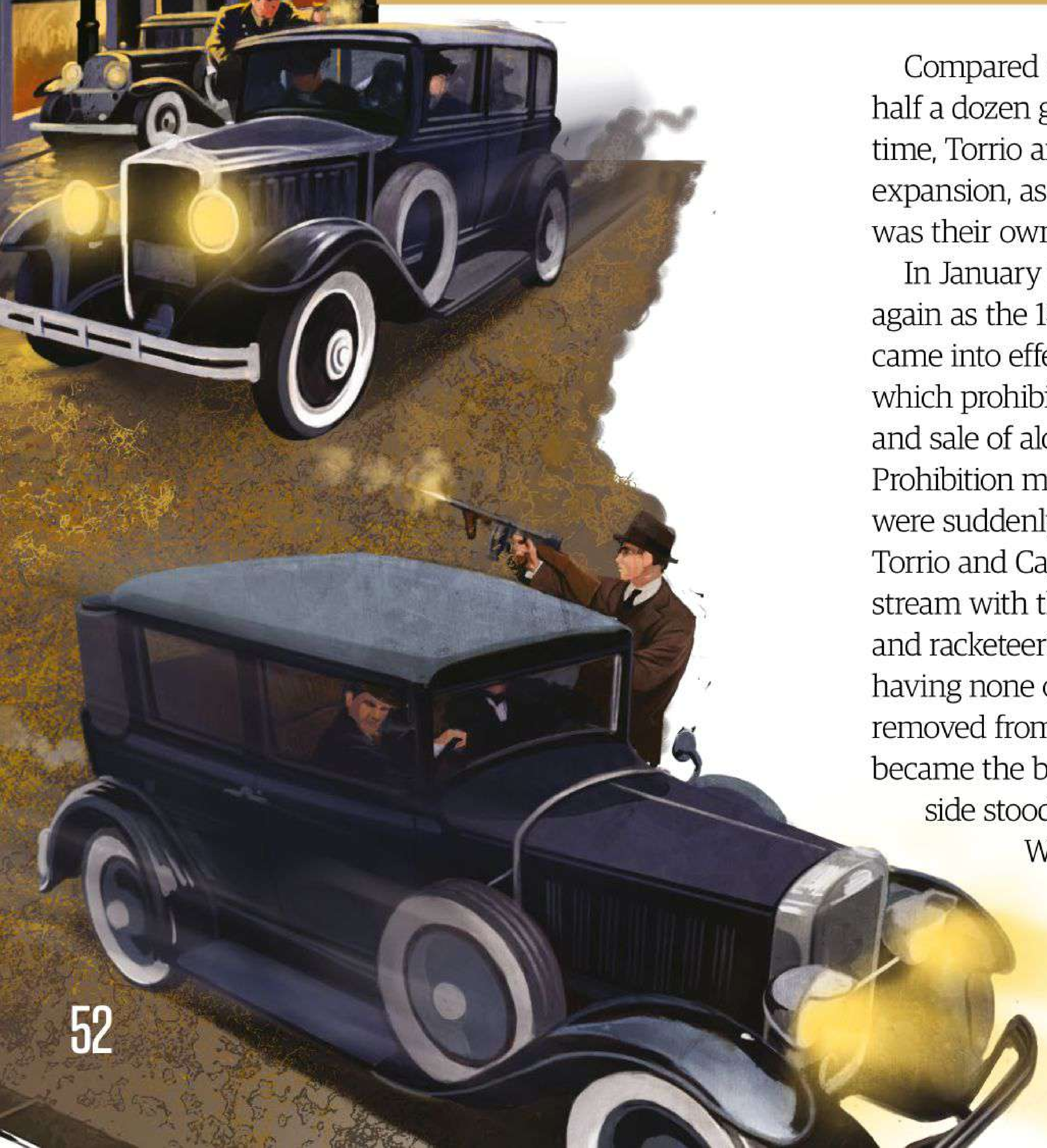
Compared to the claustrophobic Big Apple, where half a dozen gangs butted heads over a block at a time, Torrio and Capone found Chicago fertile for expansion, as the only thing that stood in their way was their own boss.

In January 1920 the rules of the game changed again as the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution came into effect. Also known as the Volstead Act, which prohibited the production, transportation and sale of alcohol – but not the consumption – Prohibition meant a huge swathe of the population were suddenly transformed into potential customers. Torrio and Capone saw that this was a revenue stream with the potential to dwarf even prostitution and racketeering, but to their dismay Colosimo was having none of it. When Colosimo was conveniently removed from the picture, John 'The Fox' Torrio became the boss of the Chicago Outfit, and by his side stood Al Capone.

With Torrio's blessing, Capone set about covertly reopening the breweries and distilleries that had been forced to close by the Volstead Act, setting up an ambitious distribution network to the city's mean speakeasies with the help of his older brothers Ralph and Frank Capone. "Nobody wanted Prohibition," he said. "This town voted six to one against it. Somebody had to throw some liquor on that thirst. Why not me?"

The loyal Ralph was put in charge of one of the Chicago Outfit's legal enterprises, a soft-drink bottling plant which earned him the nickname 'Bottles', while Frank honed a reputation for savagery that overshadowed even Al's. Estimated to have been responsible for 300 deaths, Frank infamously advised his little brother that, "you get no talk back from a corpse."

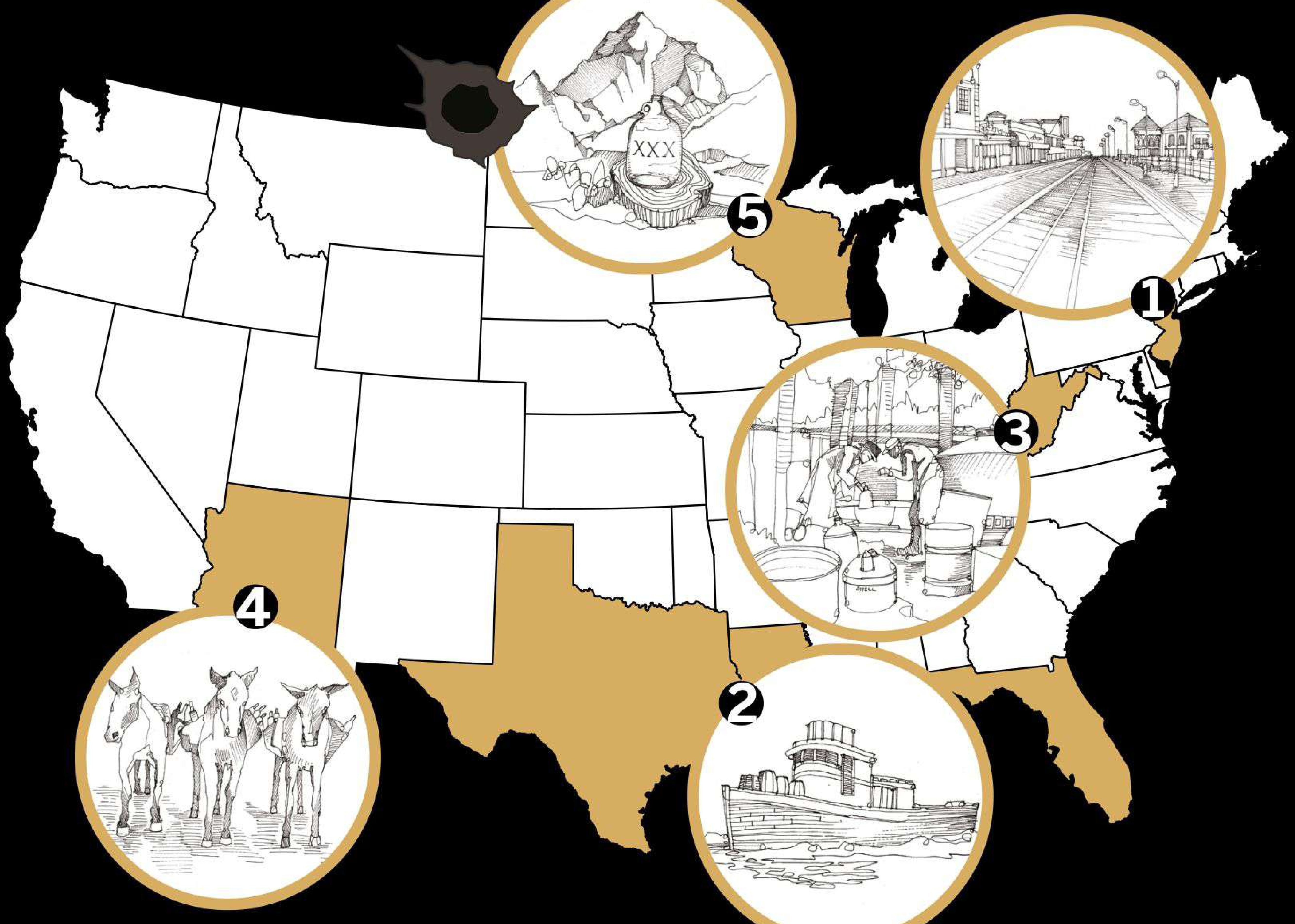
It was happening under Johnny Torrio's command but there was no doubt that bootlegging was Al Capone's kingdom, and he was soon to pay for it in blood as 1923 saw the downfall of Chicago's sticky-fingered mayor, 'Big Bill' Thompson. The Democrat William Emmett Dever was voted in on a pledge to sweep the gangs from the city, and Torrio entrusted Capone with an urgent relocation to Cicero – the



How America swam with booze

1. WHISKY ON THE BOARDWALK

Ships laden down with whisky from Canada would anchor off the coast of New Jersey, well beyond the maritime limit patrolled by the US Coast Guard. Smugglers would sail out to pick up the crates of booze and New Jersey's vast coastline became something of a free-for-all, with rival gangs hijacking each other's shipments. The hedonistic boardwalk resort of Atlantic City became the major gateway with the town's Irish-American racketeer Enoch 'Nucky' Johnson taking a major cut before it moved onward to Capone in Chicago or other mobs in New York and Jersey City.



2. RUM FROM THE CARIBBEAN

With Prohibition, Cuba emerged as a hedonistic getaway from the newly 'dry' US to the Bacardi-soaked Caribbean. Traffic flowed both ways, however, with 'rum runners' smuggling from Cuba, Jamaica and the Bahamas into South Florida, Texas and Louisiana.

In Texas, Galveston became the major entry point, supplying the rest of Texas and much of the Midwest. Dubbed the 'Free State of Galveston', brothers Sam and Rose Maceo ruled the local vice trade and successfully held off competition from Capone and New York boss Albert Anastasia.

3. A LAKE OF WHISKY

Although Ontario had its own temperance laws, they didn't ban distilling alcohol – leading to a flow of hooch across Lake Michigan and up the Detroit River from Windsor to Detroit. With illegally obtained papers saying their final destination was Venezuela, they would quietly off-load their cargo in Motor City instead. Detroit had been 'dry' well before Prohibition and the Purple Gang tightly controlled the rum-running trade and were major suppliers to Capone's Chicago Outfit.

4. MULES FROM MEXICO

Mass smuggling of US goods into Mexico was turned completely on its head thanks to Prohibition. Now home-made tequila and mescal was smuggled in the opposite direction by mule in groups of three or four, often crossing rivers at night, or by truck and car along dusty and isolated roads.

Texas's 1,300km (800mi) Mexican border was simply too wide to be adequately policed, and cat-and-mouse chases between the smugglers and Texas Rangers became the stuff of legend.

5. MOUNTAIN MOONSHINE

While champagne, gin, rum and whisky were available to those with the cash to cover its dangerous distribution, the poorer had to be taken care of too and moonshine cut the costs significantly.

Rural communities in the Appalachian Mountains and the Midwest had a tradition of home brew, but now a market opened up for their moonshine.

Stills could explode and quality control was poor and potentially life-threatening – but moonshiners often expanded their operations into barn-sized breweries.

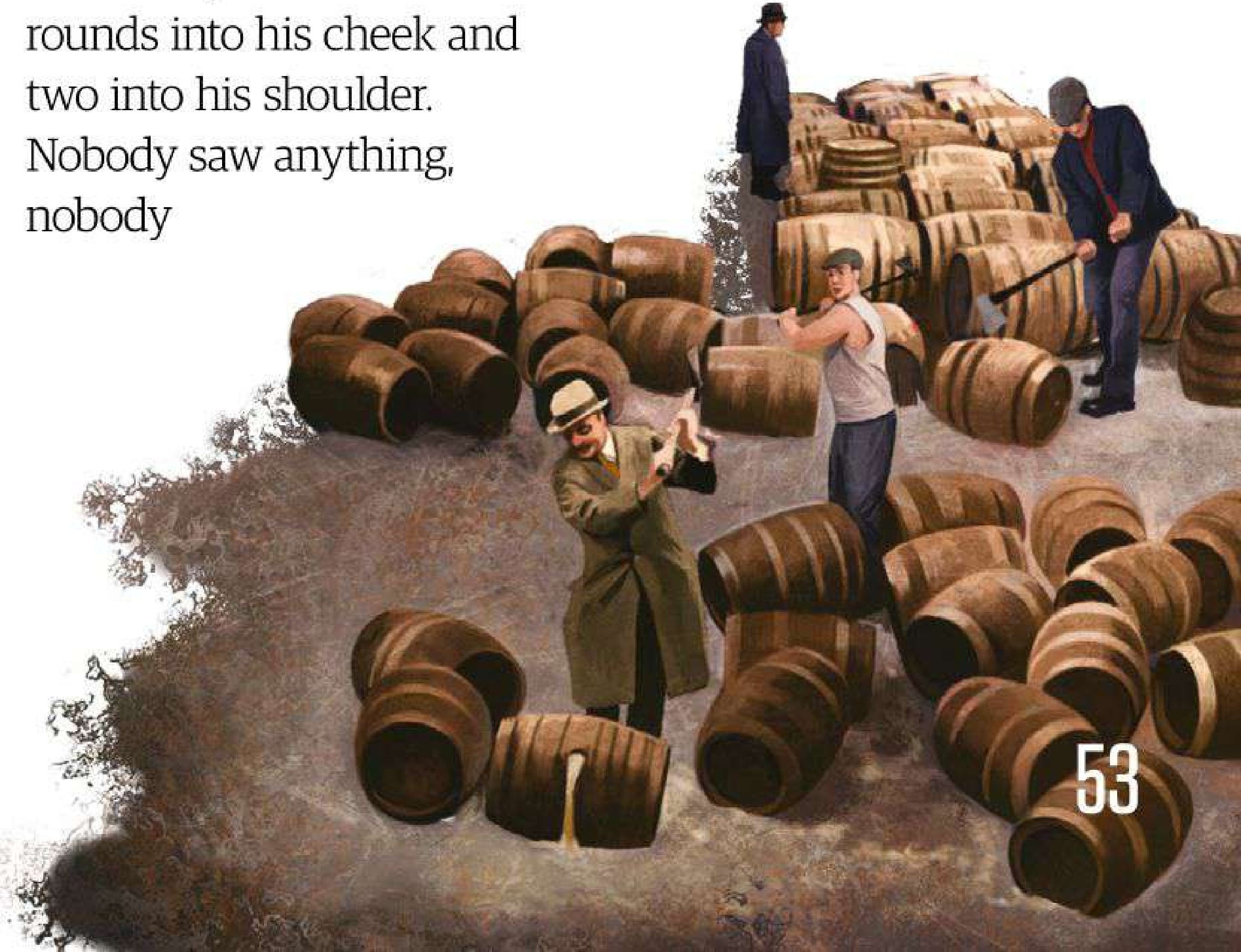
fourth largest city in Illinois – just outside of Chicago and the legislative reach of 'Decent Dever.'

While Torrio and Capone had ruled their criminal empire largely as Colosimo had – with money in the right pockets and threats whispered in the right ears – the takeover of Cicero was an overt display of force, as Capone set about rigging the mayoral election for the mob's pet politician, Joseph Z Klenha.

On the eve of the 1924 mayoral election, Frank Capone burst into the office of the Democrat candidate for Cicero with some of his thugs, beating the hopeful to a pulp with their pistol butts, trashing his office and firing their revolvers into the ceiling as a preamble for the next day's audacious takeover. As cold, grey 1 April dawned, Capone hoods stormed into the polling stations to screen voters, snatching their ballot papers from them to ensure they were ticking the right box. Election officials with the stones to intervene were dealt with; a Democrat campaign worker was shot in the legs and dumped in a cellar, two other men were shot in the street and another had his throat cut.

Eventually, a desperate judge bussed in 70 Chicago police officers, deputised on the spot into the Cicero Police Department, to restore order. As the rain started to fall, Frank Capone found himself in a firefight outside a polling station. Opening fire on an approaching police car, he was gunned down by the startled cops, but it was too late – the town belonged to the Chicago Outfit. Frank got a funeral fit for war hero, with $20,000 worth of flowers placed around the silver plated coffin and over 150 cars in the motorcade.

Despite the appalling bloodshed in the takeover of Cicero, Al Capone had been something of an enigma to the press. However, as he got his hands dirtier and dirtier and frequently acted unstably – a possible consequence of syphilis contracted back in New York – his name was beginning to be heard outside of darkened back rooms where shady men made deals. A few weeks after Frank's body hit the pavement, small-time burglar 'Ragtime' Joe Howard was enjoying a drink in a bar, when two men entered. Witnesses, who quickly forgot all the other details, recalled him say a friendly "Hello Al" before he was shot point blank – four rounds into his cheek and two into his shoulder. Nobody saw anything, nobody



St Valentine's Day Massacre

STEP 1

GIVING THE NOD

Mobster and boxer 'Machine Gun' Jack McGurn, a survivor of an attack by the rival North Side Gang, approaches Al Capone in his Miami winter home with a plan to take out the North Side leader, George Clarence 'Bugs' Moran and his lieutenants.

STEP 2

THE SET-UP

On 13 February 1929, McGurn has a booze hijacker approach Moran about selling him some top-end whisky for the bargain price of $57 a case, they arrange to meet in the morning. He adds the whisky is stolen from Detroit's Purple Gang – suppliers to Capone's mob.

STEP 3

THE LOOK-OUTS

McGurn stations lookouts – the brothers Harry and Phil Keywell, both members of the allied Purple Gang – in an apartment opposite Moran's headquarters, a nondescript garage behind the offices of SMC Cartage Company at 2122 North Clark Street.

STEP 4

TRAP CLOSES

On 14 February at 10.30am, the North Side Gang gather at their garage HQ, expecting a shipment of Old Log Cabin Whiskey. McGurn's scouts think they spot Moran arriving – it's Albert Weinshank, wearing the same-coloured coat and hat as his boss.

STEP 5

THE AMBUSH

Four gunmen in a stolen police car – two of them wearing police uniforms – burst in. Believing this to be a routine raid, the six members of the North Side Gang and two of their associates surrender and allow the 'policemen' to remove their weapons.

STEP 6

LUCKY ESCAPE

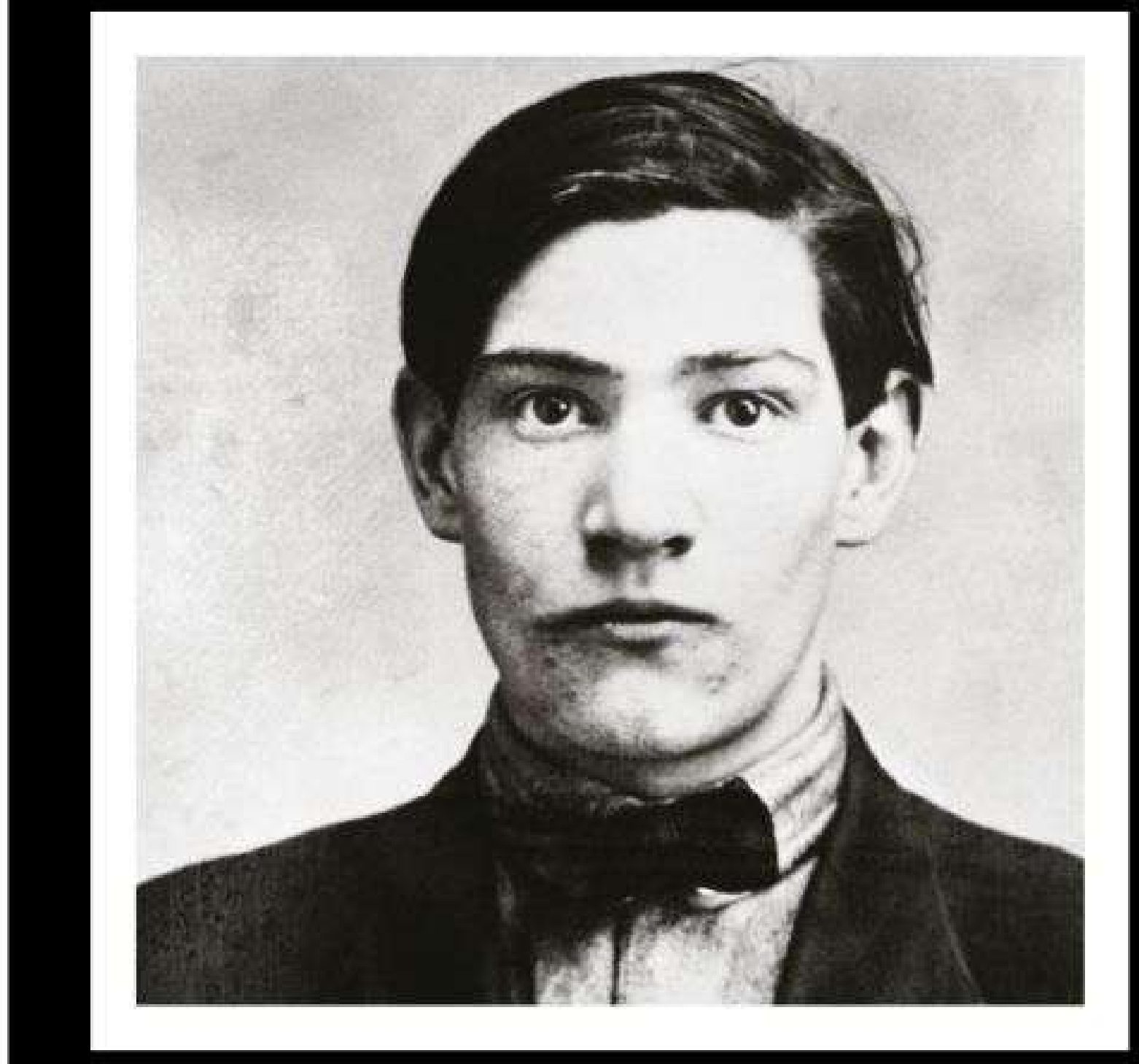
Moran and Ted Newberry arrive late through a side street in time to see the police car pull up and wait it out in a café. Spotting another mobster, Henry Gusenberg, they warn him off, while a fourth survivor also arrives late. He notes down the car's license plate and skedaddles.

Murder weapon

Fitted with either a 20-round box or the iconic 50-round circular drum, the Thompson Submachine Gun could fire between 800 and 900 rounds a minute, allowing its wielder to spray his enemy with the entire magazine in a matter of seconds. Though retailing for $200 at a time when a car cost $400, it used ubiquitous .45 ammunition and could be easily broken down for transport and reassembled in under a minute. Effective at a range up to 45 metres (150 feet), the Tommy gun was perfect for close-range firefights across streets and the marble counter of the speakeasy. It quickly became a cultural symbol of gangsters in the 1920s, so much that when the police started recruiting their 'G-men', they made sure to equip them with Tommy guns of their own.

Victims

Four unfortunate victims of the massacre

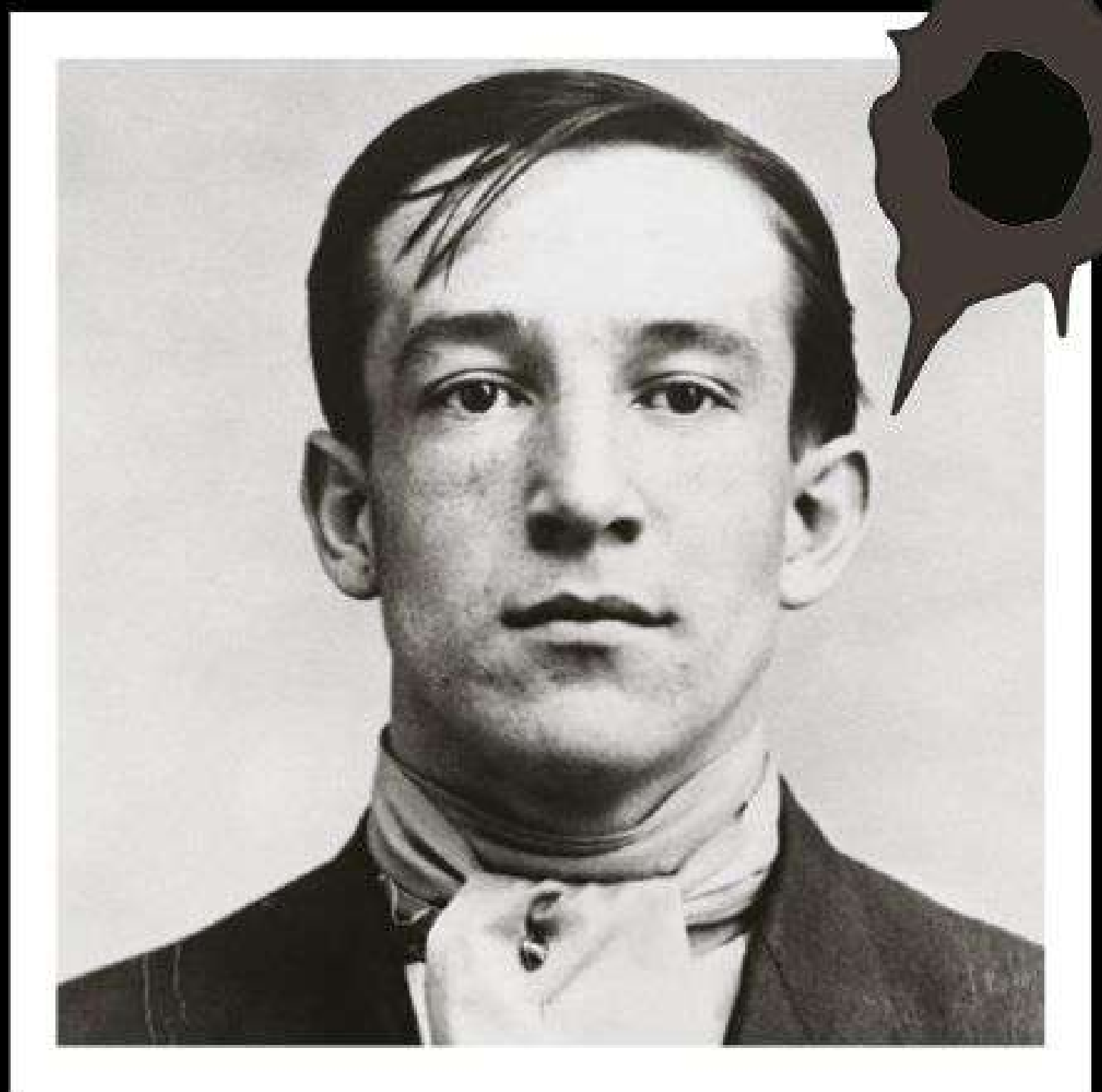


John May

Not a member of the North Side Gang, May was a mechanic who worked on their cars and occasionally as muscle. May was trying to stay out of trouble, but the demands of seven children left him with no other option but to take work from the mob.

Peter Gusenberg & Frank Gusenberg

Hitmen for the North Side Gang, the Gusenberg brothers entered the criminal underworld in their teens. They took part in a drive-by shooting of Capone's HQ in 1926 and killed two of his allies in 1928.



Adam Heyer

Moran's business manager and North Side Gang accountant, Heyer owned the lease on the gang's headquarters. Described as a snappy dresser, Heyer had been in prison twice – once for robbery and once for running a confidence game.

Police investigation

The hunt for the killers

Frank Gusenberg lived on for hours despite being riddled with wounds, but sticking stubbornly to the mob's code of silence he refused to admit he'd even been shot, let alone who'd done it, before he died. The Chicago Police Department quickly announced that they believed Capone associates John Scalise, Alberto Anselmi, Jack McGurn and Frank Rio were responsible, but the case floundered due to lack of evidence and McGurn skipped town with his moll.

In frustration, the police began its retaliation efforts by shaking down Detroit's Purple Gang on the basis that Moran's mob had recently been hijacking their liquor shipments. On 22 February, the burnt remains of the police Cadillac were found, but it was impossible to pin it on either Capone or the Purple Gang, while the two murder weapons later turned up in a police raid on the Michigan home of bank robber and hitman Fred 'Killer' Burke in November that same year.

Burke, who led a vicious gang that Capone called his "American boys", was finally arrested in March 1931, attempting to rob a bank in Kirksville, Missouri, and died in prison in 1940 from diabetes. Having killed a Michigan police officer, the Chicago police were unable to extradite him to Illinois and his role in the St Valentine's Day Massacre went unexamined.

Meanwhile in a completely unrelated case, the FBI had finally pinned down the ruthless Barker-Karpis gang of bank robbers and kidnappers, when one of their members – Byron 'Monty' Bolton – confessed to the St Valentine's Day Massacre and implicated Burke. Having no jurisdiction over the case, the FBI suppressed the information but it finally leaked to the press, adding to the already considerable confusion and the mystery of the entire case.

recognised the man, but the police knew who was responsible and so did the press, so for the first time, Capone's mugshot appeared on the front page.

In private, Capone's gang whispered that Howard had stuck up Jack 'Greasy Thumb' Guzik for $1,500, boasting he had "made the little Jew whine." Guzik was Capone's trusted money man, responsible for regular payoffs to cops and judges. Soon the name 'Scarface' began to stick, needling away at Capone's vanity – he never allowed the left side of his face to be photographed – and he began to lash out at the flickering flash bulbs of the photographers.

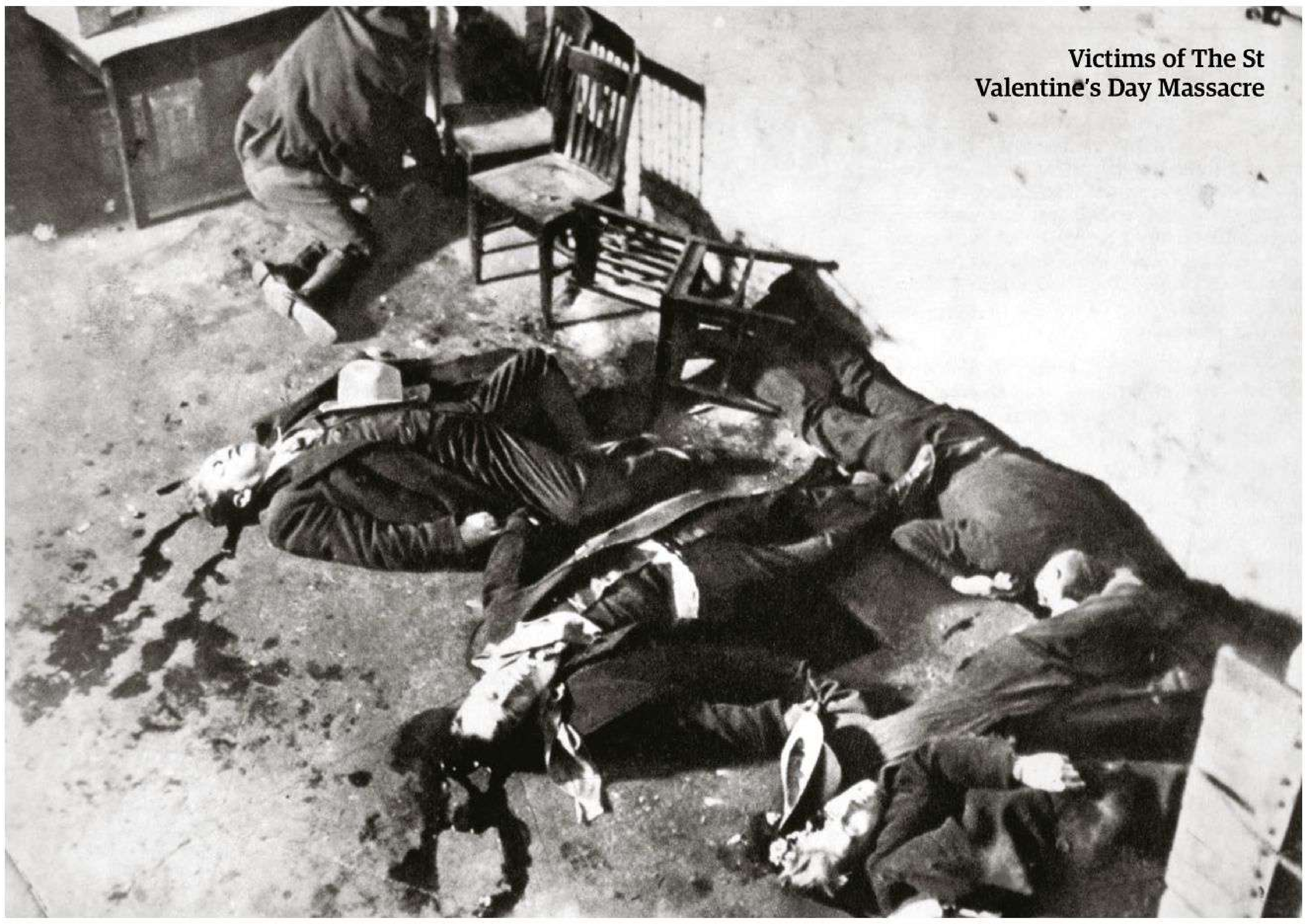
There were far more immediate threats than damning headlines, though. The predominantly Irish-American North Side Gang run by Dean O'Banion controlled the breweries and the bootlegging in Chicago's North Side and had resisted all of Torrio's efforts to bring them to heel. Alliances and truces had dwindled and fallen apart, but the last straw came on 19 May 1924 as O'Banion finally relinquished his share of the Sieben Brewery to Torrio. As soon as Torrio and his boys – joined by their allies in Little Sicily's 'Terrible Gennas' – showed up, a conveniently timed police raid swept in and the boss was left with a $5,000 fine and a nine-month jail sentence. "Deany was all right," smirked Capone, who took over the day-to-day running of the mob while Torrio served his sentence. "But like everyone else, his head got away from his hat."

One day while O'Banion clipped chrysanthemums in his flower shop, Schofields, Mike 'The Devil' Genna, John Scalise, Albert Anselmi and Frankie Yale strode in. As O'Banion and Yale shook hands, Scalise and Anselmi fired two bullets into his chest and two into his throat. As he lay on the floor in a pool of blood and petals, he was shot in the back of the head for good measure. He had been dealt with.

George Clarence 'Bugs' Moran took over the North Side Gang and nursed their grudge, moving the headquarters from Schofields to the garage that would become the site of the shocking St Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929, the culmination of a brutal and bloody five-year gang war between the Chicago Outfit and the North Side Gang.

Upon his release Torrio kept a low profile – safe in the knowledge that with Capone in the hot seat, he'd be less of a target. For all of the Fox's wiles, he just hadn't reckoned on how personal this war had become. Returning from a day shopping with his wife on the morning of 24 January 1925, gunfire lit up the street from a blue Cadillac lurking on the curb, shredding shopping bags to confetti. Blood mingled with the groceries from a litany of wounds as Johnny Torrio stared at the sky, the shrieking of Anna Torrio strangely distant. As Bugs Moran stood over him, blocking the crisp winter sun, his revolver levelled at Torrio's skull – the gun clicked on empty and the would-be assassins fled.

> "His revolver levelled at Torrio's skull – the gun clicked on empty and the would-be assassins fled"



Victims of The St Valentine's Day Massacre

THE MASSACRE

STEP 7

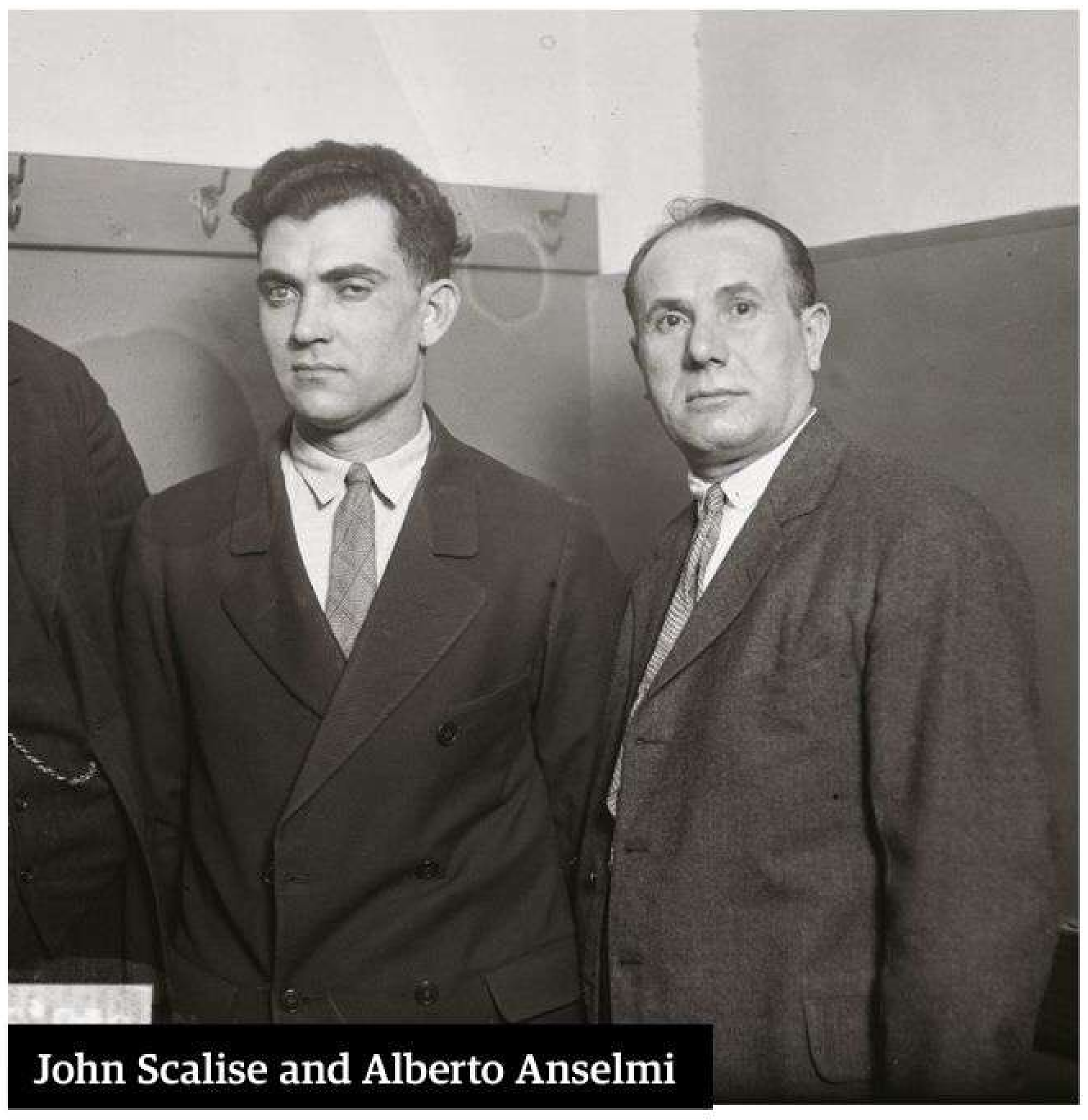
The two fake cops line the men up against a wall. Suddenly the two plain-clothes assassins open fire with Tommy guns while the others join in with a sawn-off shotgun and .45 handgun – spraying each man with at least ten bullets across their head and torso.

STEP 8

THE COVER-UP

The men in uniform lead the two plain-clothes assassins back to the police car with their hands raised, as if they'd been arrested. Neighbours, peering out of the windows, alerted by the rattle of gunfire, assume the villains have been apprehended.

Suspects Who might have pulled the trigger?



John Scalise and Alberto Anselmi

John Scalise and Alberto Anselmi

Capone's most feared hitmen, the Sicilian-born 'murder twins' were believed responsible for the death of North Side Gang boss – and Moran's predecessor – Dean O'Banion in 1924, as well as a failed attack on Moran and the murder of two police officers in June 1925. Both were sent to prison, but released a year later.

Frank Rio

One of Capone's most loyal and dependable bodyguards, Italian-born Rio had been arrested twice, once for handling stolen furs and once for the daylight robbery of a mail train but intimidation and bribery of judges helped him escape conviction, earning him the nickname 'Slippery' Frank Rio.

> "Capone slept by his mentor's bedside – the men of the Chicago Outfit standing guard around the clock"

Five facts about Scarface

- Capone's specially outfitted, bulletproof Cadillac was seized by the US Treasury Department in 1932. It was later used by the government as President Franklin Roosevelt's limousine.
- Even though he is synonymous with Chicago, he only lived in the city for 12 years of his life.
- Allegedly, he had never heard of Eliot Ness, the government agent sent to bring him to justice.
- The man who helped America swim in booze during Prohibition's favourite drink was Templeton Rye whisky.
- His men carried out most of the deaths he is responsible for, but Capone is still thought to have killed more than a dozen men personally.

Capone's ascendancy was immediate as Torrio underwent emergency surgery. Capone slept by his mentor's bedside - the men of the Chicago Outfit standing guard around the clock, eyeing each disinterested nurse and flower-clutching day visitor suspiciously. "It's all yours, Al," said Torrio eventually. "Me? I'm quitting. It's Europe for me."

With the Fox quietly returning to Italy, Capone moved his headquarters into Chicago's Lexington Hotel, taking over the fourth and fifth floors where he held court like an emperor. A concrete vault was installed in the basement and a secret staircase hidden behind a mirror in one of his bathrooms, just one part of a web of tunnels that would allow him a quick escape. Rising late most days, he took his time pouring over the morning papers like a statesman, before dressing himself in expensive finely tailored suits. Early afternoon, Capone moved into his study in another suite where petitioners waited anxiously for favours and his patronage. Nobody talked about the "Free Kingdom of Torrio" anymore. No, now the press called Cicero the "Capital of Caponeland."

Capone began to court newspaper men, handing out expensive cigars and inviting them to lavish parties, where the lord of the Chicago underworld played billiards with boxers, baseball players and the notoriously corrupt mayor of Chicago, Big Bill Thompson, miraculously re-elected in 1927. "Public service is my motto," Capone explained to attentive reporters in December 1927. "99 per cent of the public in [Chicago] drink and gamble and my offense has been to furnish them with those amusements. My booze has been good and my games on the square."

Already the public had some sympathy for the bootleggers and Capone took hold of the notion and twisted it into the spectre of Robin Hood, portraying himself as heroic outlaw giving the people what they wanted. The bigger Capone's business became, the more intricate and vulnerable the network of mobsters, bribes and alliances required to sustain it. It got to a point where the endemic corruption of Chicago's law and government simply couldn't be ignored. In the wake of the shocking St Valentine's Day Massacre, Herbert Hoover was elected US president on an anti-corruption platform. His first move was to dispatch Prohibition agent Eliot Ness and a handpicked team of incorruptible 'Untouchables' to clean up Chicago's streets by raiding Capone's speakeasies and stills, and more importantly, it transpired, a team of IRS agents headed by accountant-turned-lawman Frank J Wilson

Capone with family and friends at a picnic, Chicago, 1929

Capone and Alcatraz

What was he sentenced for?

Capone was sentenced to 11 years for three counts of tax evasion (1927-29) and two counts of failing to provide tax returns (1928-29) as his lavish lifestyle and lack of legitimate income was used against him. 11 further counts of tax evasion and 5,000 violations of the Volstead Act were dropped out of fear the prosecution would be unable to get a conviction.

How was life for him in jail?

Initially, Capone served his sentence in Atlanta, Georgia, continuing to rule his crime empire by proxy, bribing guards with thousands of dollars hidden in the hollow handle of a tennis racket to be able to communicate with the outside world. He was then sent to the newly opened Alcatraz, where his link to the outside world was finally severed.

What was his defence?

Capone's legal team originally struck a deal with the prosecution to admit to the lighter charges and serve between two and five years so business would be able to go on as usual. However, when details leaked to the press the outrage was so great that the deal was immediately canned and the judge threw the book at him.

Was Alcatraz a 'hard' prison?

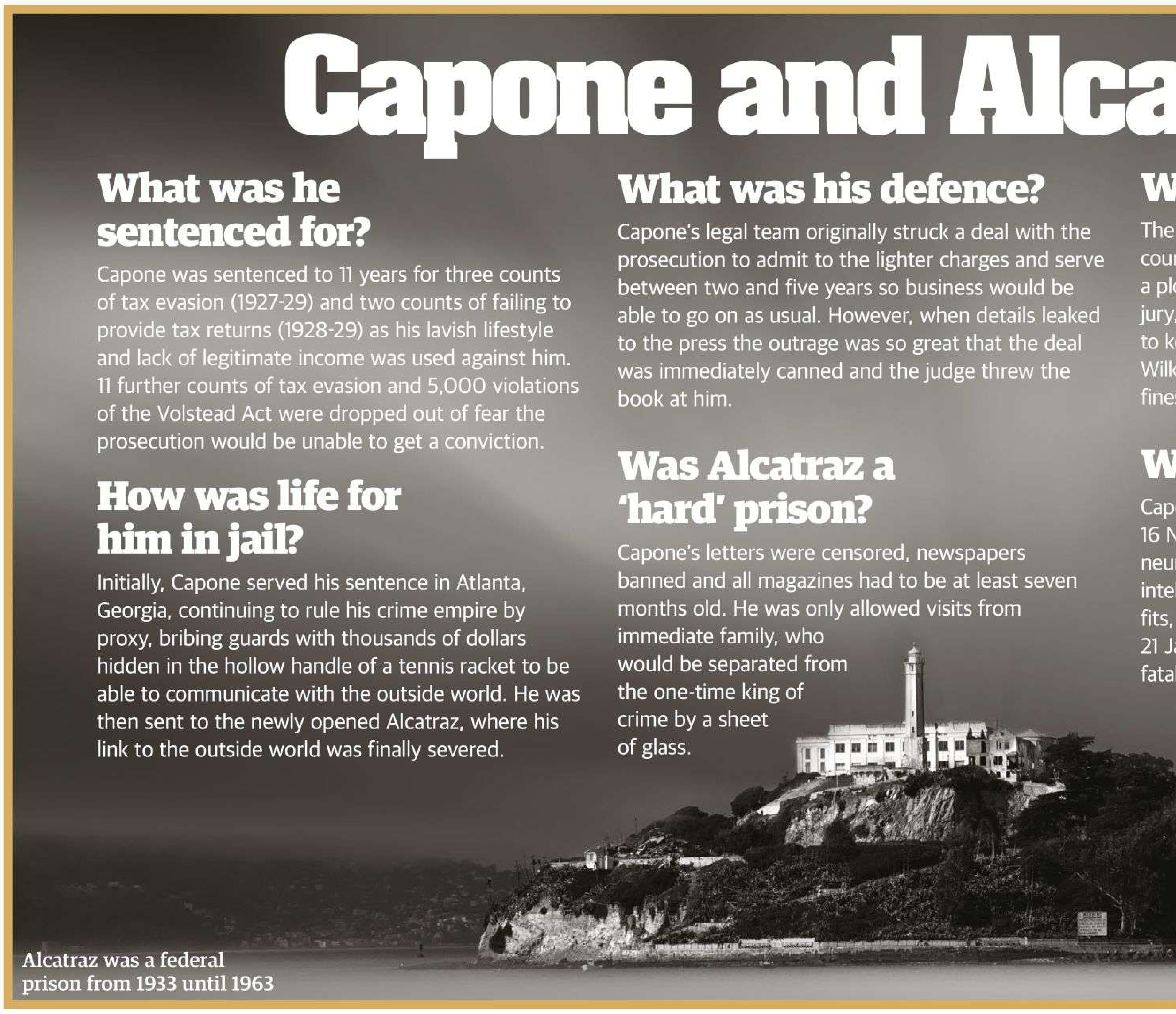
Capone's letters were censored, newspapers banned and all magazines had to be at least seven months old. He was only allowed visits from immediate family, who would be separated from the one-time king of crime by a sheet of glass.

What happened at trial?

The jury was suddenly exchanged for another in the court by Judge Wilkerson when the police learnt of a plot from Capone's mob to bribe them. The new jury, all from rural Illinois, were sequestered overnight to keep them out of the Chicago Outfit's reach. Wilkerson sentenced Capone to 11 years, $50,000 in fines, court costs of another $30,000 and no bail.

Why was he released?

Capone was released into the care of his family on 16 November 1939 due to brain damage caused by neurosyphilis. By 1946, he was deemed to have the intelligence of a 12-year-old, suffering from delusional fits, raving about communists and plots to kill him. On 21 January 1947, Capone had a stroke and suffered a fatal heart attack on 25 January 1947, aged 48.



Alcatraz was a federal prison from 1933 until 1963

with a mandate to turn over Capone's finances for something that would stick in court.

"Every time a boy falls off a tricycle, every time a black cat has gray kittens, every time someone stubs a toe, every time there's a murder or a fire or the Marines land in Nicaragua, the police and the newspapers holler, 'Get Capone!'" raged Chicago's premier gangster in his penthouse. "I'm sick of it."

As the gangster was having a tantrum, one of the men tasked with bringing him to justice was having second thoughts. "Doubts raced through my mind as I considered the feasibility of enforcing a law which the majority of honest citizens didn't seem to want," Ness admitted in his autobiography. "I felt a chill foreboding for my men as I envisioned the violent reaction we would produce in the criminal octopus hovering over Chicago, its tentacles of terror reaching out all over the nation. We had undertaken what might be a suicidal mission."

While Capone wallowed in fine silks and syphilitic megalomania in his penthouse, Ness and his Untouchables began nipping at his heels – shutting down 18 stills and arresting 52 bootleggers in a single night. In the first six months alone, Ness's daring raids had cost the Chicago Outfit an estimated $1,000,000, as well as some loyal lieutenants, who now languished in jail for violations of the Volstead Act. He shrugged off Capone's clumsy attempts at bribery, as well as two assassination attempts.

It was only ever an irritant, taking chunks out of his income and his pride – but to a mobster as egotistical as Capone, such defiance drove him into a rage. It was a fury Ness gleefully exploited – parading captured vehicles outside his hotel and taunting him on the phone. However much Ness might have damaged his ego, the real danger to the man who made the streets of Chicago swim in booze and blood came from fraud investigator Frank J Wilson as he poured over reams of paperwork.

In May 1927, the US Supreme Court's 'Sullivan decision' had reversed a bizarre legal loophole that meant gangsters were legally exempt from having to register illegal income on their tax returns, on the basis that it would violate their Fifth Amendment rights. Manly Sullivan, a Chicago bootlegger whose trial lent the decision its name, received a landmark conviction for tax evasion.

That same year, the Chicago Outfit's income was an estimated $108 million. Capone simply had to be next. Facing a possible 34-year jail term from Wilson's tax case and Ness's Prohibition case, the former would stick and the latter wouldn't, but that scarcely mattered. It was the end of Capone's empire of crime, brought down not by gunfire, violence and police raids, but by the simple, dry truth of the balance sheet. The reign of Chicago's public enemy number one was over.

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The mobster who made Vegas

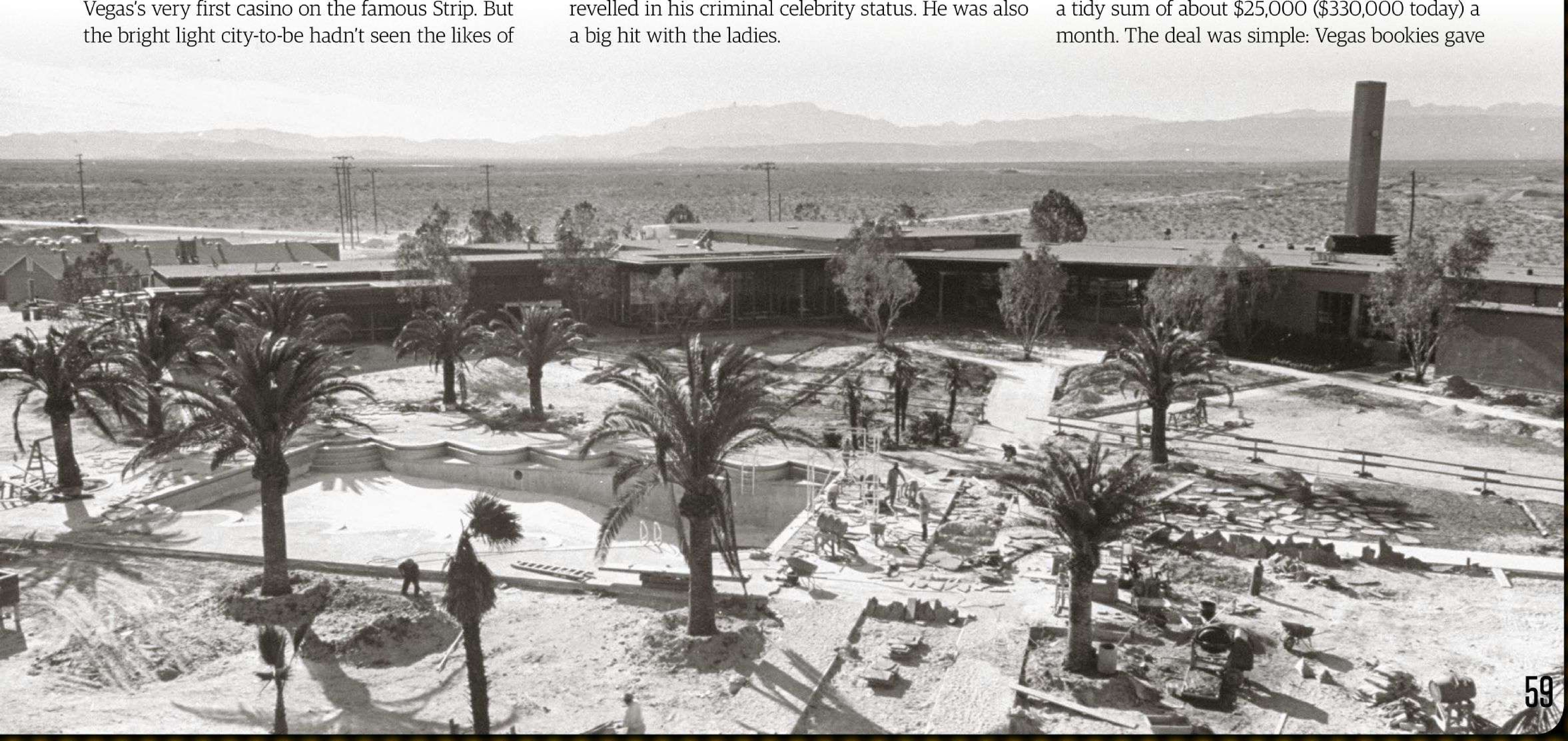
The story of Bugsy Siegel and the Flamingo Hotel

When Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel landed in Las Vegas in 1945, bringing with him a whirlwind of under-the-table deals, the feds were paying attention. It's not as if Vegas, which by the 1930s and 1940s had grown from an abandoned Mormon fort into a desert waterhole frequented by fly-boys from the local United States Air Force base, was operating under the radar of the authorities. Since gambling was legalised in Nevada in 1931, there had been a low hum of criminal activity in what would become the jewel in the state's crown. Al Capone and his brother Ralph had even made plans to run their own casino there in the early days and some think they had a hand in the Pair-O-Dice Club – Vegas's very first casino on the famous Strip. But the bright light city-to-be hadn't seen the likes of Siegel before. This cat was connected to every East Coast mobster worth knowing. He was cunning, had a hair-trigger temper, a gift for violence and was fiercely intimidating.

These talents made him a natural leader of Murder Incorporated, the ruthless hitmen-for-hire enforcement arm of Meyer Lansky and Charles 'Lucky' Luciano's National Crime Syndicate. Moreover, Siegel was an archetypal Hollywood gangster of his generation – a devilishly handsome, magazine-cover hero with piercing blue eyes who matched his silver-screen looks with effortless charm. Bugsy made sure that he was seen in the trendiest nightspots and restaurants, he schmoozed with film stars like Clark Gable, and enthusiastically revelled in his criminal celebrity status. He was also a big hit with the ladies.

While the West Coast Hollywood playboy lifestyle undoubtedly suited Siegel, there was an (il)legitimate reason for his move to California. He could see a very lucrative future for the mob in the dustbowl of Las Vegas, and while his partners several thousand miles to the East weren't as convinced of the investment, Siegel was at that point in good standing with bosses like Lucky Luciano and his old friend Lansky. They were willing to bet heavily on Siegel's success, which would ultimately pay off for the mob, if not for Bugsy himself.

Siegel had already muscled in on the Las Vegas race wire service via one of Meyer's lieutenants, Moe Sedway, and by early 1945 it was returning a tidy sum of about $25,000 ($330,000 today) a month. The deal was simple: Vegas bookies gave



a cut of their profits – no argument – in return for betting odds and reliable data on winners. Siegel was expanding into the south west via Phoenix bookmaker Gus Greenbaum and was in the process of creating a bookmaking empire with a veneer of legitimacy, while he skimmed thousands of dollars away under the table. This inevitably put him into contention with former bootlegger and extortion racketeer Jack Dragna, the "Capone of Los Angeles". There was no love lost between these two characters. But as Siegel was the representative of the powerful Luciano crime family and golden boy of the East Coast crime syndicate, Dragna was forced to give way after Lucky Luciano himself advised him that it would be in his "best interest" to defer to Siegel. As it turned out, it really was: Siegel immediately moved in on the LA bookmaking scene and 'convinced' bookies on his turf to pay tribute to Dragna, further lining his wallet.

Siegel also set up a Mexico-California drug trade, blackmailed Hollywood film companies by organising union strikes and 'borrowed' hundreds of thousands of dollars from celebrities he had befriended, safe in the knowledge they wouldn't ask a reputedly violent mobster for it back. These are stories for another time, though.

The upshot of all this criminal entrepreneurship was that by the time Siegel had begun pulling strings to build a hotel-casino in Vegas, he was an influential man on the West Coast with more than a few aces up his sleeve.

Siegel was very wealthy but most of his money was dirty. So, with some laundered seed capital from his friends in New York, he moved into suite 401 of the Last Frontier Hotel while he looked for a potentially profitable investment. The El Cortez Hotel & Casino was picked up for $600,000 in late 1945, and in July 1946, sold for $766,000. Not a bad return in six months at all, even for this high-rolling gangster. Siegel's ambitions grew as he eyed up his next investment, which would see his name made synonymous with the most iconic (and controversial) hotel and casino in Las Vegas history. But for the first time in his criminal career, Bugsy would find the cards stacked against him.

> "By the time Siegel had begun pulling strings to build a casino in Vegas, he was an influential man on the West Coast"

Billy Wilkerson was a prominent Vegas nightclub owner who founded the *Hollywood Reporter*, an entertainment trade rag that he used to list suspected communist sympathisers (the foundation of what would be the infamous Hollywood blacklist). Wilkerson had picked up 13 hectares of cheap desert about a kilometre from the Last Frontier and was planning on building a more European style of hotel-casino, a class above the spit-and-sawdust saloons and tables of the old Strip. But iron, bricks and basic building materials had been sucked up by Uncle Sam during World War II and the construction business had far higher overheads than they had before the war. So Wilkerson quickly found himself in over his head and $400,000 short of finishing his dream. He sought investors and found an eager Benjamin Siegel, posing as a respectable businessman, with the cash and charm to win him and his 'investment partners' two-thirds of a stake in the project – the glitzy 'Flamingo Hotel and Casino',

By the time this first mugshot of Bugsy was taken in 1928, the 22-year-old was already a wealthy bootlegger

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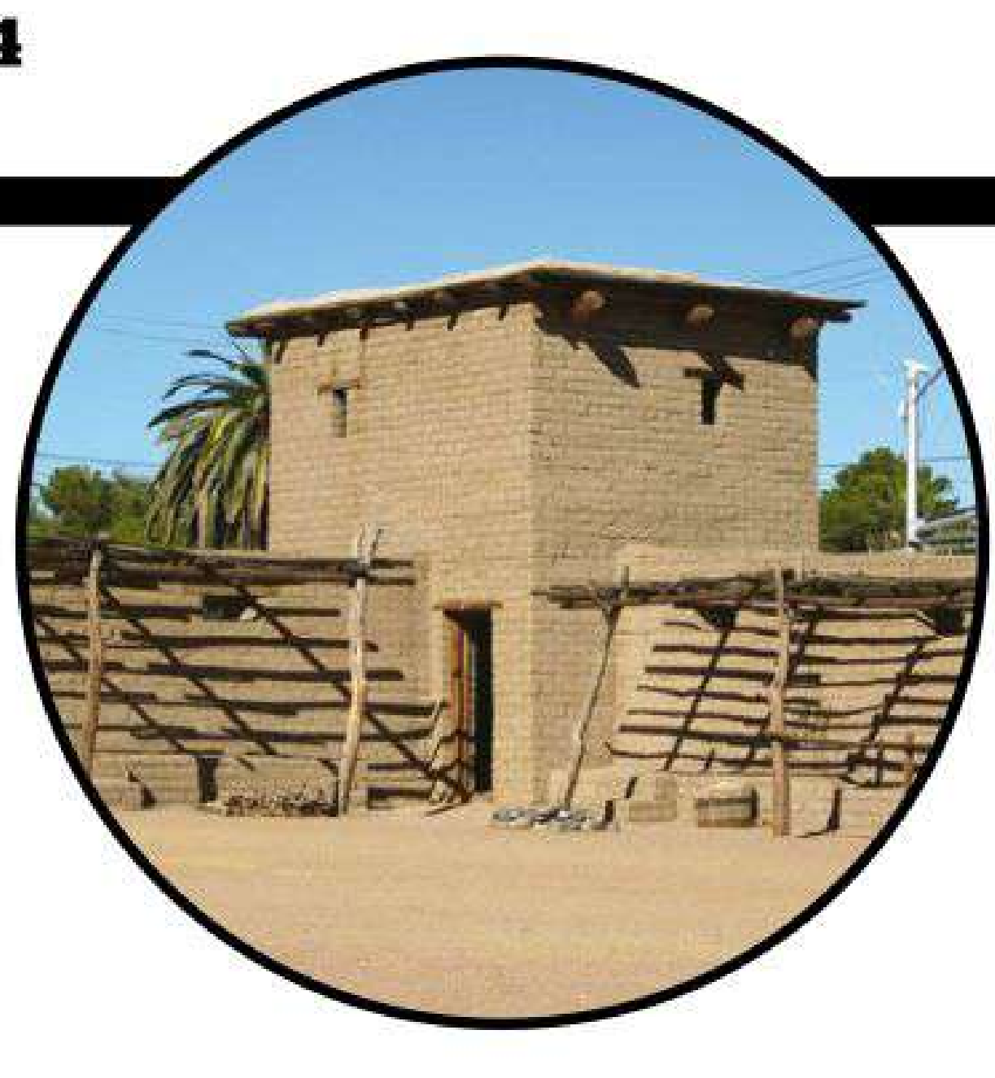
The Flamingo was already turning a profit when Siegel died, but its veneer of respectable gambling brought a higher class of punter and even bigger profits in the 1950s

Timeline

Discovery
Mexican merchant Antonio Armijo stumbles upon the valley with his caravan, while looking for a trade route to Los Angeles. He calls it Las Vegas, which means 'The Meadows' in Spanish.
1829

Army fort
In preparation for the war brewing with the Mexicans, John C Fremont is sent into the valley to gather forces and create an outpost fort that remains for a generation. Vegas's famous Fremont Street is named after him.
1844



Mormon fort
Years later, 29 Mormon missionaries from Utah led by William Billinghurst occupy the fort with the intention of making it a Mormon stronghold. It was abandoned a year later after finding difficulties surviving in the desert heat.
1855

'Las Vegas Rancho'
The fort changes hands a few times until Archibald Stewart is given it in lieu of a debt and his wife becomes its first postmaster. The land is irrigated and over the next decade farmers move in. Las Vegas is permanently settled.
1881

City
Las Vegas rapidly grows with the railroad that has been built to run through it bringing hundreds of settlers. It's finally made a city after 44 hectares of what is now downtown Vegas is snapped up by buyers.
1905

supposedly named after Bugsy's leggy firebrand of a girlfriend, Virginia Hill. By the time Wilkerson realised exactly who his new partners were, it was too late to pull out.

During this time, and in the prelude to the second Red Scare, FBI Director John Edgar Hoover was focusing the efforts of the agency on political subversives. But he could hardly allow a high-profile mobster to gain a foothold in Vegas on his watch. Siegel was already under scrutiny, but Hoover wanted to up the ante. In a memorandum to the attorney general written on 18 July 1946, he put forward a case for more intense surveillance on the mafioso: "In the course of the above investigation, we have ascertained that Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, notorious racketeer with underworld connections on the west and east coasts and Las Vegas, Nevada, will again visit the latter city within the next few days and reside at the Last Frontier Hotel there in Suite 401. As previously pointed out, we are desirous of following Siegel's widespread activities and, therefore are requesting authority to place a technical surveillance on his telephony at the Last Frontier Hotel which will be Las Vegas 1800. At this time, I also with [sic] to point out that Siegel, because of his far-flung interests, is almost in constant travel status, thereby making it extremely difficult at times to follow his activities and anticipate his movements. It is recommended, therefore, that authority be granted to cover any hotels, residences, or places of business which might be used by Siegel in his journeys throughout the country. I strongly feel that this type of coverage is necessary if we are to establish his racketeering connections."

The FBI was cleared to bug rooms and tap phones, and the Suite 401 phone tap proved particularly fruitful: Siegel was recorded discussing his interests in Vegas with the East Coast and his lieutenants. The FBI now had hard proof that the mob was looking to stick around. Still, the feds barely had any real case against him, so Hoover played a trump card that nearly bust Bugsy.

Walter Winchell was a big-time broadcaster with a popular 15-minute Sunday national radio gossip program, and on 14 July 1946, he exposed Siegel's hand to the nation with this simple statement: "According to the FBI, a prominent West Coast racketeer is endeavouring to muscle a prominent West Coast publisher out of his interest in a West Coast Hotel."

Siegel was livid. His attempt at legitimacy was being put into jeopardy along with the hotel, gambling and liquor licences he was in the process of securing for the Flamingo. He had one of his men phone Winchell and put the heat on him and Winchell folded under the indirect wrath of an angry mob boss. "Winchell identified his source as the Director," so goes the FBI summary of the phone tap that took place in the "Boiler Room" of Las Vegas 2460, the "Las Vegas" club. "When he learned that Siegel and [CENSORED] were involved, exclaimed, 'God, what a mistake I made. I may have caused them (Siegel and [CENSORED]) to lose their hotel licenses'." The name censored by the FBI is thought to be that of a high-ranking member of the Chicago outfit.

The Suite 401 tap subsequently recorded a fuming Siegel making audacious statements to his girlfriend. "Let [him] tell me where he got it from," he spat, referring to none other than J Edgar Hoover, before he ranted on about having his men

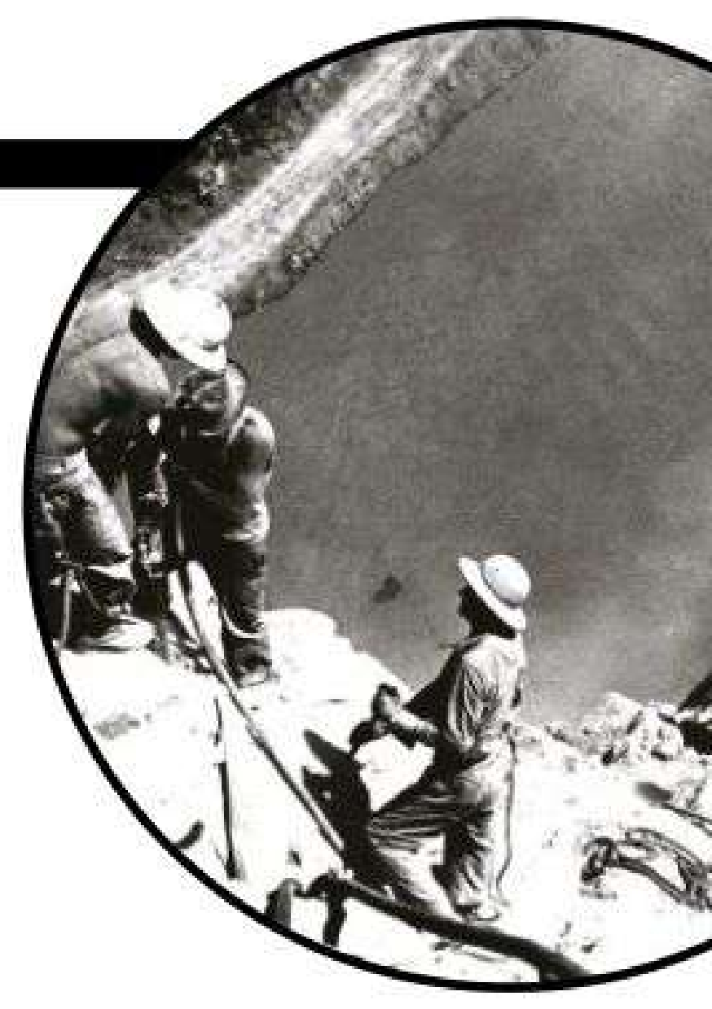
TWO JACKPOTS AT ONCE
$100
$10
$200
TWO
7-7-7
7-7-7
PAI

Siegel's girlfriend, Virginia Hill: she had to appear before the Kefauver special committee in 1951, which was investigating organised crime across the USA

Gambling outlawed
Nevada is the last state to ban gambling, even flipping a coin for a drink, from its bars and public places. But Vegas continues to prosper.
1910

Gambling legalised
After relaxing gaming laws over the previous few decades, gambling is finally decriminalised in the Silver State, and Nevada cities, including Vegas, become a boomtown for casinos.
1931

Siegel's Vegas
Bugsy first starts visiting California in the early 1930s after several attempts on his life back east. He has much of his business in Los Angeles at the time, but the casino scene in Vegas is an attractive one to the entrepreneurial crook.
1933



Hoover Dam built
It took five years and $49 million to build the Hoover Dam across the Colorado river. Workers are restricted from visiting Vegas while they are involved with its construction.
1936

Bugsy Siegel shot
After a disastrous opening, Benjamin Siegel is killed by an unknown hit man. He lived to experience just a taste of success with his hotel and casino, the Flamingo.
1947

Nuclear testing
The infamous Nevada test site opens with the first of more than 100 nuclear explosions. With a clear view from Vegas, the city's sky bars do a roaring trade in 'Atomic cocktails' with a view of the mushroom clouds.
1951

Bugsy's rant

Incensed by Winchell, Siegel vents his anger to his girlfriend, unaware the FBI is listening

BUGSY SIEGEL: We'll make him bring Hoover in front of me and let that [redacted] tell me where he got it from... I said tell that dirty son of a [redacted] – you may say don't give me a licence here and we go in and spend 3 million dollars, every nickel we possess. He thinks it's Meyer and I in there... Winchell apologised 40 times, said I would never do a thing like that. He said all right, [redacted] you're a friend of mine but these two either fellows are dearer friends to me in there, he said, and me especially is a very dear friend of mine, wouldn't do a thing in the world to hurt him, said I want you to see the letter when you get back. Jesus Christ – but I know it all instigated from him see. He just have given it to him to give to Hoover, see. He called and said I get the letter just now, you should see the front of it – right there in front of what you call it, the senator, that contract we signed. Yeah but Winchell's liable to cop. I'll knock his [redacted] eyes out – just like this – God damned right... But now he's got this God damned letter a block long from Winchell.

VIRGINIA HILL: That means you won't get a licence?

SIEGEL: What?

HILL: What kind of licence honey?

SIEGEL: Say I came in after it and through him or something they refuse to give me a gambling licence, what am I gonna do with the hotel, stick it up my ass?

HILL: Well, why don't you get them? Then once you get them-

SIEGEL: Well, they always revoke them – get them, never mind about that, say whatever they want. If there is no connection in this town to get these things they can put you out of business, honey. Why to [sic] you think I work so much time with [redacted]? Give them money and this and that. Although it is legitimate business but still, you know, these [redacted] when you have a licence...

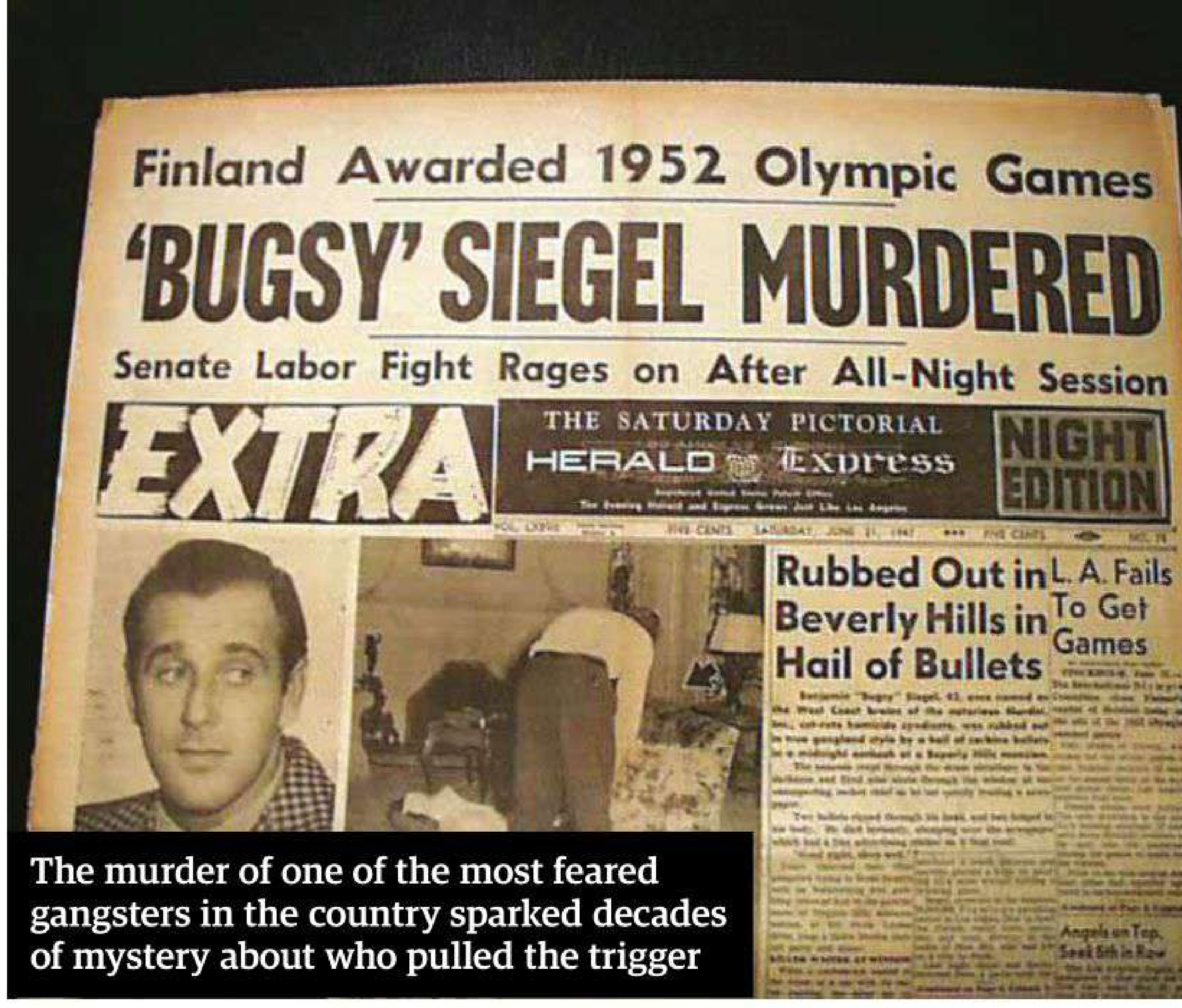
[call ends as the sound of a child entering the room can be heard]

[ends]

© Alamy, Corbis, Getty Images

Flamingo HILTON

The last original structure of the Flamingo was torn down in 1993 and a garden built in its stead: despite Siegel's notoriety, he was given this memorial in recognition of his vision of the famous hotel



Finland Awarded 1952 Olympic Games

'BUGSY' SIEGEL MURDERED

Senate Labor Fight Rages on After All-Night Session

EXTRA

THE SATURDAY PICTORIAL

HERALD Express

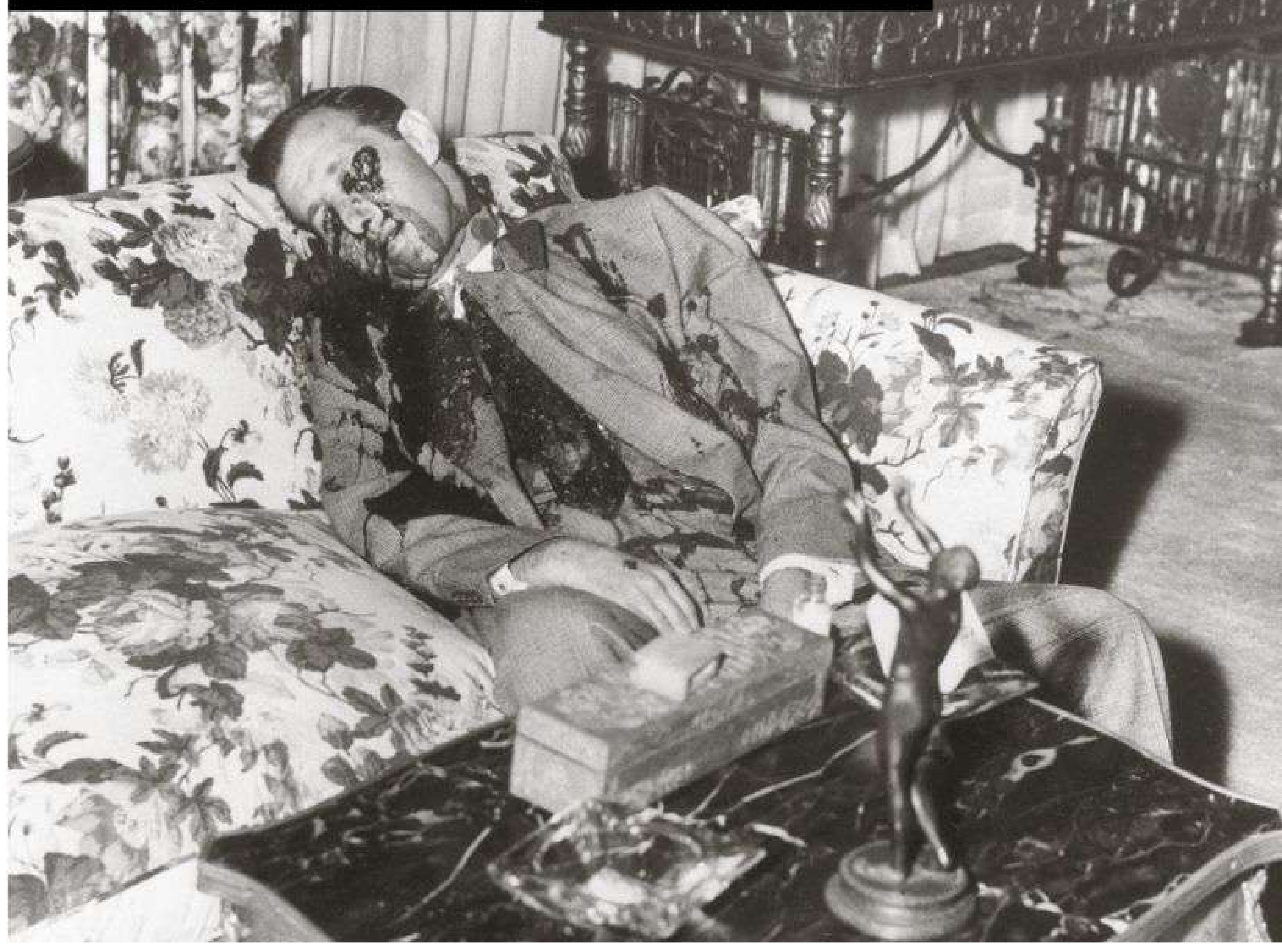
NIGHT EDITION

Rubbed Out in Beverly Hills in Hail of Bullets

L. A. Fails To Get Games

The murder of one of the most feared gangsters in the country sparked decades of mystery about who pulled the trigger

No one outside of the mob saw his death coming, though Bugsy must have had an inkling that there were those who either saw him as a problem or would profit from his death



bring Hoover to him and getting him to squeal about where he got his information from. A lot of bluster from a man known to have a short fuse, for sure. But when one of the most powerful and feared underworld figures in the United States threatens violence against the director of the FBI, even empty threats are taken seriously. The conversation was duly detailed in three pages of typewritten memo by special agent A Rosen and airmailed to FBI headquarters in Washington.

Bugsy had been respected among his peers for being ballsy, but now he was overplaying his hand. At 9.30am on 21 July 1946, he sought to reassure Meyer Lansky: "Oh, the guy called me up. I knew I had something to tell you." Siegel concluded the conversation by passing the FBI situation off almost as an afterthought. "Last night, he read me a letter he just got from Winchell. He (Winchell) says in the longest day he never dreamt it was him or I. He said, 'I want you to understand that the other fellow is even a better friend than you are. I'd never done that in a million years. The man who I thought it was is [CENSORED].' He said, 'I went right back to my man that gave it to me,' and then it tells him it's Mr Hoover, you understand? And bowled the by-Jesus out of him. He says, 'I want you to tell my mutual friend that when I come out I will explain the whole thing,' you couldn't give me a million dollars to do that. He (Winchell) said I would never do that because he went on to tell him how it might have hurt me up here. But I found out that it's still him. So I'll tell you when I see you."

Perhaps, in the creation of his West Coast empire more than 3,000 kilometres from his bosses, Siegel had forgotten who he was working for, because Lansky's curt and guarded responses to Siegel suggested he wasn't buying it. Winchell later told Hoover that he never sent a letter of apology to anyone, so maybe the New York kingpin saw right through Siegel's bluff.

Still, Bugsy was to get away with a lot more before his East Coast partners called in their debts. Las Vegas summers can easily see the mercury slide north of 40 degrees Celsius and, by August 1946, Siegel was feeling the heat in the Mojave. His wire service, Trans-American, was experiencing difficulties and profits would slump for the next few months, leaving him to face another awkward phone call with Lansky. He was also in the process of a messy divorce with his first wife and the FBI was looking into getting him on a government fraud rap, as Siegel tried to get the Flamingo built as quickly and cheaply as possible. Bribing officials and breaking rules to get his way was second nature to Bugsy (after a bit of old fashioned thuggery, that is) and he'd been wriggling his way through the red tape of the Civilian Public Administration (CPA).

Apparently, the Las Vegas community didn't think much about a lavish new mobster-run hotel-casino in their midst, either. An angry Richard King wrote this article for the 1 August 1946 issue of the *Las Vegas Tribune*: "The Flamingo, giant gambling resort now under construction on Highway 91, at a cost estimated to reach the $3 million mark, promises to be the biggest and most elaborate club in the country. Under normal conditions, construction of this type may be

tolerated and by many welcomed as an additional enterprise to put Las Vegas on the map. At present, however, construction of another gambling resort of such magnitude is causing much unfavorable comment, especially among veterans who have been trying vainly to purchase building materials for homes that they feel they are entitled to build for their families. Contractors and building supply houses state they do not have any materials to build homes. But, somehow, builders of gambling clubs seem to have no trouble whatsoever getting anything they want…"

That $3 million (more than $36 million today) turned out to be a conservative estimate. Problem was, while Siegel had the right idea of a glamorous Vegas with the mob running the show, he wasn't the right guy to execute this vision. He skimmed money off anywhere he could, even as his own construction crew moved expensive building materials in through one door and out the other, only to sell it back to the project the next day. His budget was beginning to spiral out of control, Clark County was denying his gambling and liquor licences, and the feds were now investigating him for bribery. Apparently, Siegel was wryly bribing CPA officials with beer.

It took another four months before he finally got his licences in order, and the Flamingo Hotel and Casino could open to a bumpy start. Siegel wanted an early launch to recoup any revenue he could for what was threatening to be a $6 million white elephant, but the hotel was unfinished and fate paid a cruel part in the 26 December 1946 flop. Lightning had prevented planes full of keen gamblers from taking off in Los Angeles, so many of Siegel's guests didn't arrive. Guest suites hadn't been completed yet either, so when the entertainment – which included comedian and musician Jimmy Durante and the Xavier Cugat band – for the 'West's Greatest Resort Hotel' concluded, guests and punters returned to rival Vegas casinos where they were able to gamble and drink all night before retiring to their suites.

A storm was brewing back east, too. Siegel's old friend Lansky was holding the Cosa Nostra at bay, but his investors were growing impatient. The Flamingo had to close again just a month later, but reopened in March 1947, and by May, it was finally in profit to the tune of $250,000.

Some suspect that this was too little, too late for Bugsy. On the evening of 20 June 1947, the casino don was reading the newspaper in the living room of Virginia Hill's mansion in Los Angeles when an unknown assassin fired a volley from a military carbine, striking him twice in the right side of his head. In a gruesome twist, the newspapers made much of the fact that Siegel's left eyeball had been blown out of the socket and was found on the far side of the room.

The fate of the Flamingo and the mob's future in Vegas mirrored that of Bugsy's. Lansky took over management of the luxury hotel, its success was ensured and the mob made a killing skimming off the weekly take. Who'd have thought? Turns out, Bugsy was right about the place all along. The years that followed would see the Cuban Revolution oust the Mafia from their casino interests in Havana and the US turn to the Bright Light City for its kicks, where Lansky and his associates were already casting long shadows in the desert.

Who killed Bugsy?

No one knows who whacked Siegel, but there are several parties who had good reason to want him dead

01 Mob 'housekeeping'

The Havana conference of December 1946 brought the old world Cosa Nostra and US Mafia leaders together to discuss business, mob rules and settle any beef. Bugsy wasn't invited – partly because he had his hands full with the opening of the Flamingo. But there was another reason, some think: Luciano and company wanted to discuss what to do with the increasingly cocky Siegel and the money pit he had built in the desert.

02 Pre-emptive strike

Bee Sedway, the wife of Siegel's lieutenant and partner in the Flamingo Moe Sedway, revealed in a recent interview that Siegel had threatened the life of her husband. He said, "I'll have Moe, chop his body up and feed it to the Flamingo Hotel's kitchen garbage disposal," after discovering that Moe was sending details of the Flamingo's botched accounts back to Lansky. Bee called her lover up, a lump of a man named Matthew 'Moose' Pandza, and begged him to protect her husband.

03 A woman spurned

Siegel and his girlfriend Virginia Hill had a tempestuous relationship. She was possessive and would fly into a jealous rage if Bugsy spoke to other women. She was as crooked as him, too, so when she left for Switzerland and withdrew $2.5 million Bugsy had deposited into a Swiss bank account, it didn't take the mob money men long to trace it back to the Flamingo. Was she covering her tracks?

STICK MATCH
PAT. 1,743,258 1870955
LOS ANGELES, CAL.
Hotel
Restaurant
Casino
LAS VEGAS • NEVADA •
THE
Flamingo
LAS VEGAS, NEV.

Following Bugsy's death, business at the Flamingo picked up and by 1947, gaming tables such as this 'Bird Cage' were turning a nice profit

The Rise of Pablo Escobar

The poor saw Pablo Escobar as their Robin Hood. To the Colombian and US governments he was the world's most crazed and deadliest kingpin

Colombians called them 'los mágicos' (the magicians). It was a nickname for smugglers who suddenly owned large tracts of land, lived it large in opulent mansions, owned garages full of vintage sports cars, and enjoyed all the accoutrements of stylish living. They'd conjured this formidable wealth like a magician pulls a rabbit out of a top hat.

It wasn't the kind of riches gained from typical black-market products, or even the nascent kidnapping industry. Nobody could rake in such vast amounts from counterfeit cigarettes, booze, hostage-taking or car-theft rackets. This was something different. This was something new. This was tapping into and exploiting a whole different market. Who were these guys who dressed like peasants but lived like kings?

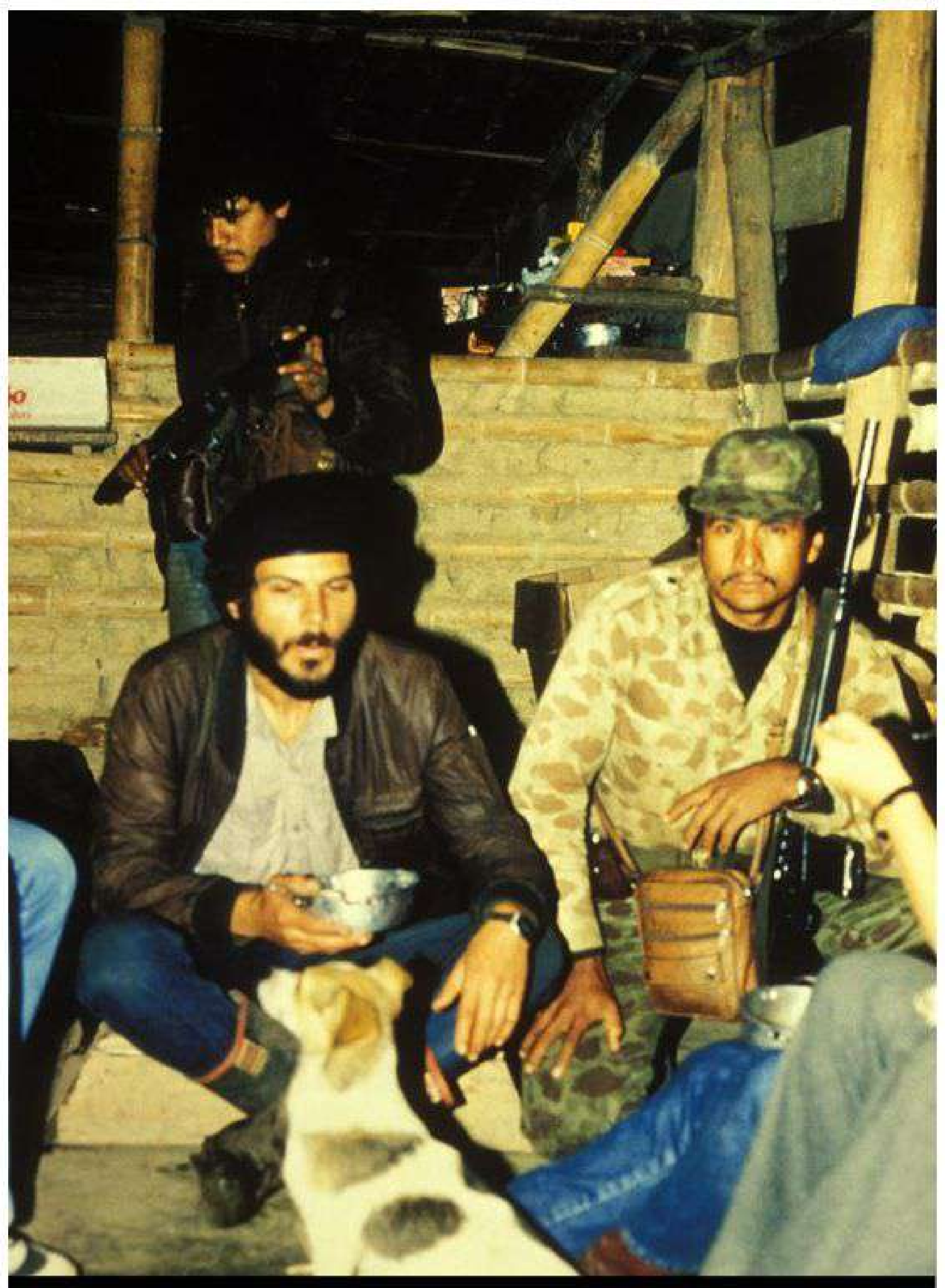
In the mid-1980s, Escobar was raking in $420 million a week, and became one of the richest men in the world

The narcotraficantes unleashed hell upon their homeland with the native coca plant turning late-20th-century Colombia into a narcocracy – a place where bullets and money did most of the talking, and even a president could be bought for a fistful of pesos.

Colombia was South America's oldest functioning democracy; one that hadn't really been plagued by military juntas, murderous dictators, show trials and disappearances that affected other fragile countries around the continent. But its political infrastructure was weak by design and further hindered by corruption. The country, too, would turn murder into an art form with bizarre methods and gruesome tortures designed to humiliate and cause severe pain to the victim. Everybody's heard the phrase 'Colombian necktie'.

© Getty

Unlike other cartel bosses, Pablo Escobar liked press attention and the love of the Colombian people. He was not a low-key guy



Carlos Pizarro Leongómez, leader of M-19, the kind of left revolutionary threat Death to Kidnappers targeted for extermination

Death to Kidnappers

In the early 1980s, an Escobar-backed death-squad movement was formed to protect narcotrafficking interests and wealthy elites

With Colombia's drug-dealing operations booming, there was a need to protect the dealers from revolutionary groups who sought to attack wealthy elites and kidnap individuals for ransom. In 1981, the sister of the Ochoas (Martha Nieves Ochoa) was kidnapped by the group M-19. Its chief claim to fame was the 1974 theft of Simón Bolívar's sword from a museum. Escobar and his gang decided an autodefensa (vigilante) unit would be a great PR stunt, and made self-interest look like patriotism. It was also rich in irony, that a former kidnapper was suddenly fighting the good fight against the scourge. One of Death to Kidnappers' most famous publicity stunts was to drop leaflets over a soccer stadium during a match with a warning to any would-be crooks: 'Kidnappers will be hanged from trees and, if not them, it'll be their pals or their closest relatives in prison'.

While playing the 'Paisa Robin Hood' to the working classes, Escobar was consolidating his empire and attacking left-wing groups, with Muerte a Secuestradores discouraging labour organisation and unions by assassinating anybody the group targeted as suspect. By 1983, there had been 240 murders assigned to Death to Kidnappers, and later in the decade, Escobar and his group increased funding by purchasing high-tech military weaponry and training the death squad in the latest army techniques. Yet there hangs over the Escobar story is involvement with M-19 and the 1985 Palace of Justice siege, proving he wasn't above switching sides – if only momentarily – to suit his aims.

The Barrios Pobre slum in Medellín thought Escobar was a great man, as he pumped millions of pesos into places like this

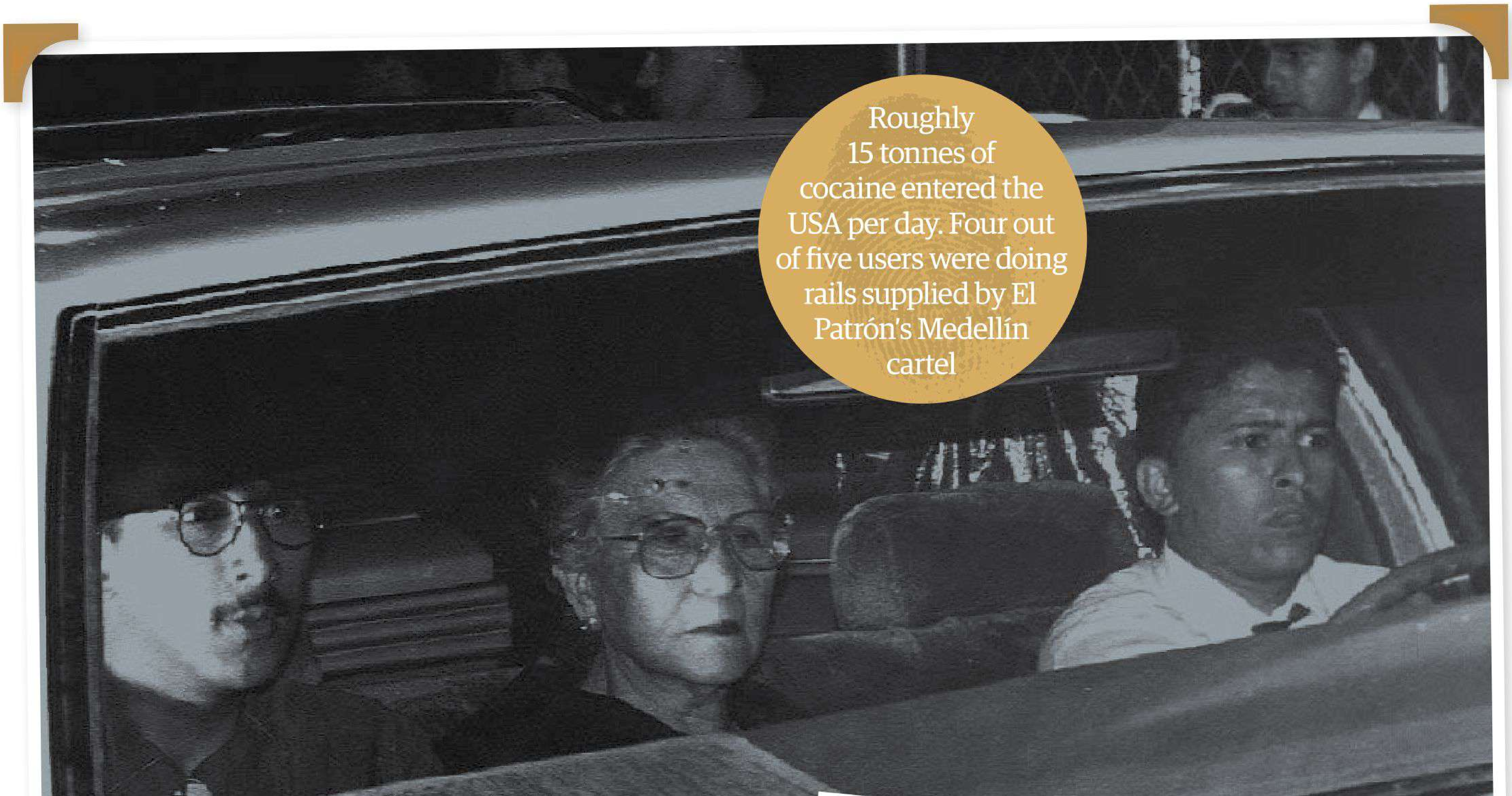
Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria was born on 1 December 1949, in the small town of Rionegro, Antioquia. The man who would become one of the richest in the world (he made *Forbes* magazine's annual rich list seven years in a row) came from a lower middle-class family. Years later, when he'd assumed the mantle of Colombia's 'Paisa Robin Hood', he presented his origins as far humbler than is accurate. He began his criminal career as a low-level street thug, but came from a relatively comfortable background – he was educated and not dragged up in the school of hard knocks like so many of his compatriots. His mother, Hermilda Gaviria, a forceful influence in his life, was an elementary school teacher, and his father, Abel Escobar, a cattle farmer who owned a bit of land.

Pablo grew up during a time of great crisis. The period between 1948 and 1958 became known in the republic simply as La Violencia (The Violence). A civil war waged between conservative and liberal parties and their paramilitary units. With the assassination of left-wing populist Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, on 9 April 1948, the country was plunged into a decade of pure murder and mayhem. The atrocities committed were beyond barbarous. Catholic-conservative forces appeared intent on wiping out leftist liberals. The countryside became a haven for bandoleros, agents of chaos fighting for neither side, and who waged death and terror against helpless peasants and farmers. In 1953, a dictatorship did occur in the form of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's government, which saw an easing of paramilitary violence and many of the bandoleros demobbed. By 1957, nearly a decade after the horror began, moderate factions on both sides of the political aisle had regained power. But it was as if the future craziness was sown into the fabric of the country by La Violencia and elite families subsequently dominated the political landscape. Many leftist groups scarpered into the hills, waiting for their chance to bring glorious revolution to the people.

This is the post-La Violencia world in which young Pablo Escobar rose from slovenly student who loved nothing more than to sit around smoking weed (a life-long passion) to major kingpin of the world's deadliest cartel operation.

It is estimated that Escobar and his sicarios are responsible for the deaths of 4,000 people

From selling contraband on the tough streets of Medellín to bank-robbing ventures, Escobar developed a mystique for daring escapades among his associates and underlings. He took chances and they paid off. When they didn't, he bribed cops to go easy on him and, although he had plenty of skirmishes with authorities, including stints behind bars, Escobar developed an aura of untouchability and ruthlessness. In fact, he redefined the latter. Nobody was going to mess with Pablo. He would brush off each run-in with the law like it was no big deal. His empire began to grow, too. Selling cheap cigarettes and fake lottery tickets to shmucks was one thing, but this was just a beginning, not the career end-goal. By his early 20s, Escobar was running a successful protection venture and car-fraud business. He'd steal brand-new vehicles from the factory, cut them up and



Escobar's mother, Hermilda, takes her son's body to a funeral home on 2 December 1993

Roughly 15 tonnes of cocaine entered the USA per day. Four out of five users were doing rails supplied by El Patrón's Medellín cartel

Escobar's grave site in Medellín is a popular tourist attraction to this day, with visitors leaving flowers and taking selfies

sell the parts. Pablo was not yet king of Medellín, but he was well on his way.

Pablo moved into the cocaine business in the mid-1970s, and co-founded the Medellín cartel with Carlos Lehder, José Rodríguez Gacha and the Ochoa brothers, Jorge, Juan David and Fabio. In just a few years, by the tail end of the '70s, they were operating the biggest cocaine distribution network in the world. The rise was fast and the profits were in the billions. The cartel was making so much, they couldn't launder it quick enough, leading Escobar to start burying his loot in fields and warehouses, and hidden in the walls of countless properties he owned.

It hadn't taken long for him to sniff out an opportunity. He'd noticed amateur-hour gangsters – most of them little more than party boys playing at being Al Capone – making strides into the cocaine biz. The burgeoning crime lord and his gang began shipping relatively small quantities into Miami by hiring American-based pilots and buying up small planes. They used Panama as a base of distribution for a while, and purchased remote-controlled submarines to drop off packages of cocaine around Puerto Rico's waters and then have boats to zip them into Florida. He bought Boeing 727s and flooded the US with so much primo product, American customs could not catch it all even if they tried. There was simply too much for them to deal with. Pablo's coke on the streets also kept prices down and affordable to punters. The first plane used in the venture would eventually take pride of place over the luxurious Hacienda Nápoles, Pablo's estate. He did have a keen sense of humour.

It all began through an acquaintance – a pilot named Rubin, who was working for Fabio Restrepo, one of the first cocaine bosses. The operation was distinctly small time, but the returns were impressive. Shipping 60 kilos of marching powder once or twice a year yielded about $40,000 per kilo. Rubin met Pablo one day in a Medellín apartment, dismissing the chubby fella who greeted him as just another street punk. Pablo wanted to sell Restrepo a bit of gear, a measly 14 kilos. The deal went through, but two months later Fabio turned up dead. Before anybody could ask any questions, the cocaine smuggling business in Medellín had a new boss. Pablo's extraordinary sense of entitlement and sickening ruthlessness was the real reason he thrived among the criminal class and became the man they all feared. He wasn't a great businessman – he was a college dropout, reasonably educated but touchy about his lack of a university degree – and sure wasn't a far-seeing entrepreneur. He was a gangster pure and true. Escobar rose in the world because he was ambitious, and what Pablo wanted Pablo took. There were only two options with Escobar, which he summed up as 'Plata o plomo'. You either took his money or you got clipped. The choice was yours.

Escobar received the sobriquet 'El Doctor' early on in his career. Although Pablo was never officially charged with the murder of industrialist Diego Echevarria, the poor of Medellín widely considered it his doing. In 1971, an Envigado businessman (Echevarria) was kidnapped and held to ransom. An

Escobar's escapades

10 PER CENT OF ESCOBAR'S EARNINGS WERE WRITTEN OFF BECAUSE RATS WOULD EAT IT IN STORAGE OR IT WOULD BE LOST OR DAMAGED BY WATER

HE BEGAN HIS CRIMINAL CAREER BY **STEALING TOMBSTONES,** GRINDING THEM FLAT AND RESELLING THEM AS NEW

FORBES MAGAZINE RANKED ESCOBAR **NUMBER 62** ON THE 1991 LIST OF WORLD'S RICHEST PEOPLE

THE US CONTEMPLATED ENTOMOLOGICAL WARFARE IN 1990, BUT SCRAPPED THE IDEA TO DROP **COCA LEAF EATING CATERPILLARS** CALLED MULUMBIA ONTO SOUTH AMERICAN SOIL

ESCOBAR HAD A PRIVATE ZOO OF OVER **200 EXOTIC ANIMALS** INCLUDING A SOCCER-PLAYING KANGAROO

WHILE SERVING TIME IN 1991, ESCOBAR TRANSFORMED HIS CELL INTO A LUXURY APARTMENT, COMPLETE WITH SAUNA, WALL-TO-WALL CARPETING AND **TUXEDO-CLAD WAITERS**

ESCOBAR WAS CONSIDERED A SUSPECT FOLLOWING THE 1993 **WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING**

BEFORE ESCOBAR'S MEDELLÍN CARTEL WAS A FULLY FLEDGED EMPIRE, HE FLEW DRUGS INTO THE UNITED STATES **HIMSELF**

Pablo Escobar's Hacienda Nápolés at Puerto Triunfo was the kingpin's luxurious estate. It featured a zoo with imported exotic animals

arch-conservative, he and associates at the time were ridding the Antioquia countryside of peasant villages, as well as laying off workers in nearby mills. With nowhere to go, the slums of Medellín were bursting with hungry people with little prospects. Despite paying a $50,000 ransom, Echevarria's corpse was found badly beaten. There would be no homecoming for Diego Echevarria. Was Pablo responsible? While he never confessed, he sure took the kudos.

Not only were the residents of the slums happy their former boss and cruel capitalist was dead, they believed Escobar was responsible and treated him as their Robin Hood figure. They started calling him 'Doctor Echevarria' and then simply 'El Doctor'. This man-of-the-people persona fed Escobar's ego and his need for publicity and attention. Interviewed on television, Escobar denied he was acting like the Sherwood Forest legend to the poor of his home town, but told the interviewer: "It's an interesting way to put it, anyway, because those who know the story of Robin Hood know he fought for the working classes."

The Medellín cartel spent $2,500 a week on rubber bands, which were needed to stack bills

Escobar and his associates decided to display their warped patriotism and opportunistic social concerns with projects and initiatives such as Medellín sin Tugiones, which involved building a new housing project to alleviate slum conditions, and roped in the city's two big soccer teams, Club Atlético Nacional (the team Pablo owned and supported) and Deportivo Independiente Medellín.

These kinds of actions proved hugely popular, and allowed Escobar and his cartel to muddy the waters of what was right and wrong. Escobar pretended he was nothing but a businessman with investments in cattle and construction. He once told a news reporter that he got his millions from a bicycle-rental business he started when he was 14 years old. He tried his damnedest to portray himself as just another hard-working guy with his fingers in a lot of pies. But when the connection between narcotrafficking and El Patrón became apparent, the citizens of Medellín mostly shrugged. If gringos in America wanted to snort cocaine, so what? It brought direct economic benefits to Colombia, in the form of social projects like Medellín sin Tugiones. What did they care? For a brief period, the cartel overlords basked in good publicity and media profiles, which were wholly positive.

"If there was ever a country that completely drifted away from reality, it was Colombia," ex-president César Gaviria put it, in the 2012 television documentary *Los tiempos de Pablo Escobar*. The 1980s would make La Violencia look like a bar fight in a one-horse town. It began as a backlash against Escobar's flirtation with real political power. In 1982, he was elected as an alternate representative to the Chamber of Representatives, and political elites did not like it one bit. In their eyes, it sullied the nation and serious politics too much to stomach. It was the fox in the chicken coop pretending to be anything but a fox. For a while, Pablo had delusions of grandeur that he would one day be president of Colombia, but those daydreams came crashing down when it was exposed in news reports that his billions came from cocaine sales. It was greatly embarrassing and there was no turning back his public image.

With the threat of extradition to the United States hanging over their heads, the cartels of Colombia

Pablo vs the Gentlemen of Cali

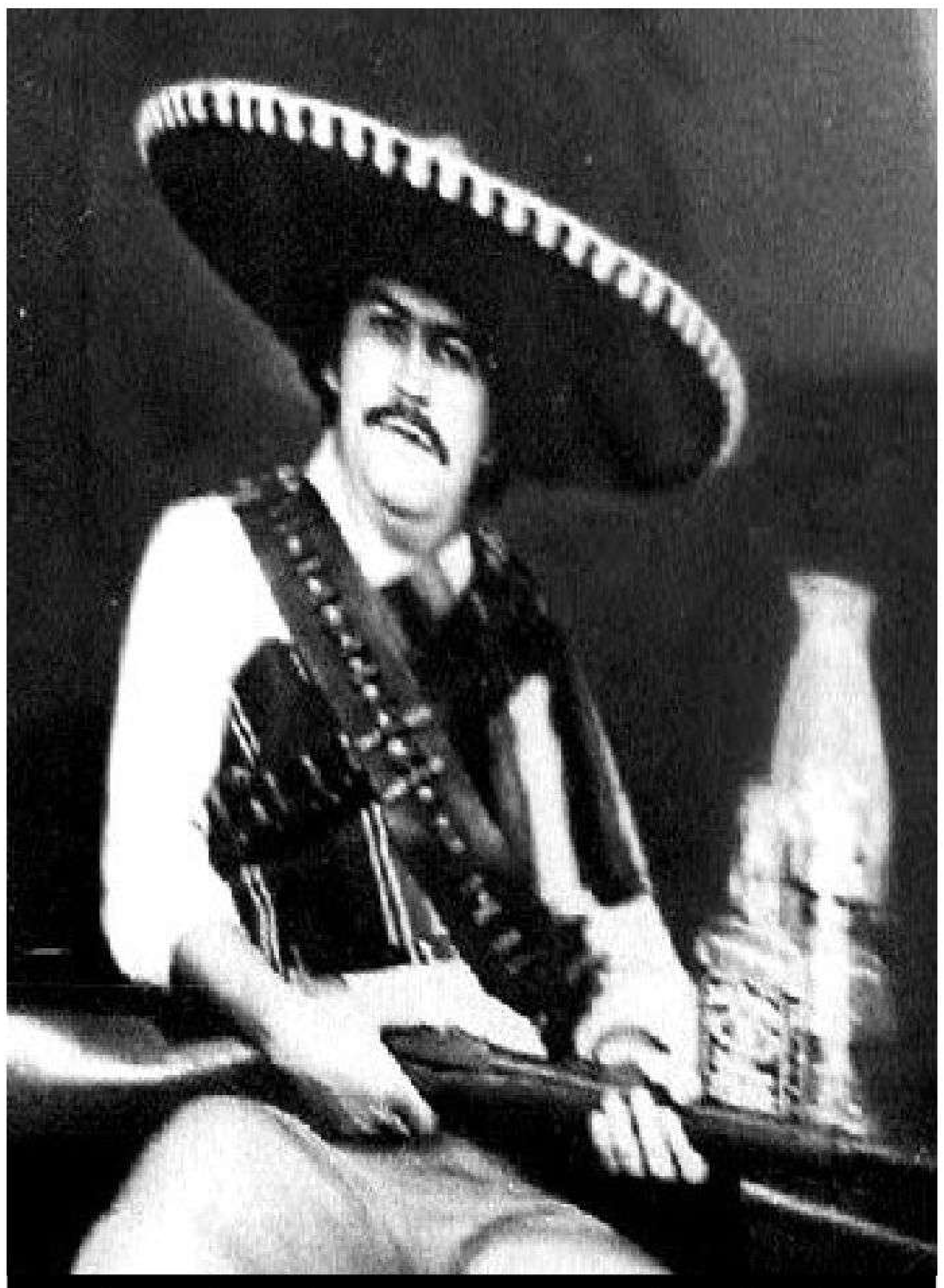
Headed by the Rodríguez brothers, the Cali Cartel played a major part in the downfall of their Medellín rival

Los Caballeros de Cali (the Gentlemen of Cali) were named so because they were not street rats born in the gutter, like many cartel bosses. Although headed by Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, they functioned as a quartet. Gilberto's little brother, Miguel, José Santacruz Londoño (aka Chepe) and Francisco Hélmer Herrera Buitrago (known as Pacho) were the 'Gentlemen'.

Like Escobar, they began as kidnappers and gravitated towards distributing marijuana, before the cocaine boom dictated they move into that arena. The Cali Cartel believed the influence of money was a better way of getting what they wanted than violent acts. They were also phantoms hiding behind legitimate business concerns, or so they thought. The group's corrupting tendrils went all the way to the top of government and their security team was so feared they became known as the Cali KGB. The Rodríguez brothers owned a chain of pharmacies, and Gilberto was director of a bank, but when Pablo began attacking them over a dispute that turned into all-out war, the brothers' mask of anonymity began to slip, and it became common knowledge that they were the heads of the feared Cali Cartel.

Gilberto and Miguel helped to fund the death-squad unit, Los Pepes, to help the government Search Bloc locate and snuff out their arch-rival once and for all. They believed the political establishment would be thankful and leave them alone. But they were wrong. By 1998, the Gentlemen were behind bars or dead.

The Gentlemen of Cali were at one time responsible for the distribution of 90 per cent of the world's cocaine



Escobar in fancy dress as Mexico's Pancho Villa. The cartel leader saw himself as a man of the people, too

SE BUSCAN
PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA
GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA
RECOMPENSA
$ 100'000.000

A television advertisement offering reward money for information leading to the arrests of Pablo and associate Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha

began to up the ante and act against what they saw as unconstitutional meddling by a global superpower. Escobar inflamed the situation with acts of narcoterror, elevating him to the world's most wanted man, and increasing the involvement of the DEA, while the CIA trained anti-communist factions deep in the jungle. Pablo wished for the whole world to bend to his will, but he had bitten off more than he could chew. His enemies began to fight back, the public became increasingly horrified and fed up that their country was gripped once again by insane levels of bloodshed, and El Patrón's grip on things began to slip. The Escobar-sanctioned assassination of justice minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla on 30 April 1984 was a decisive turning point for the cartel boss, but not a positive one. The Medellín cartel leader eventually declared open war on the political establishment, the government, his rivals in Cali and the press, and stuck two fingers up at the US administration. El Patrón had become too big for his boots, but he wasn't going down without a fight.

On 27 November 1989, Pablo's reign of terror reached insidious new heights. A forthcoming presidential election featured a candidate determined to go ahead and enforce the 1979 US-Colombia extradition treaty signed by President Reagan and President Julio César Turbay, to tackle corrupting influences in Colombia, which mired the place in stagnancy and grotesquery. Concerted efforts were also finally being made to bring down the Medellín cartel, and like a venomous snake backed into a corner, Escobar lashed out in extraordinary retaliation. The target was presidential hopeful César Gaviria.

A morning flight from the capital Bogotá to Cali, Avianca Airlines Flight 203 was blown up about four kilometres in the air during the ascent. The bombing had been concocted and proposed by Escobar during a meeting a couple of weeks beforehand, with the intended result being the extermination of pesky Gaviria. That 107 innocent lives were lost (plus three on the ground) did not concern the cartel bosses, but the real kicker was that Gaviria had been warned about potential hits on his life, and his team – pressured by DEA agents with their intel – told him not to fly that day. The bomb had been planted in a suitcase and encased in a tape recorder. According to Carlos Alzate, a top sicario, the unknowing assassin was paid to record the conversations of the person next to him. When the poor kid pressed the record button, the bomb was detonated. The inclusion of two US citizens among the dead allowed America to exert even more pressure and pump more funds into ridding the world of terrorist Pablo Escobar.

© Getty Images

The gloves were off. The Los Extraditables had issued an ominous warning a few weeks before the Avianca bombing, which set out their stall in unblinkered terms: "We want peace. We have screamed out loud for it, but we cannot beg for it… We do not accept, nor will ever accept, the numerous arbitrary raids on our families, the ransacking, the repressive detentions, the judicial frame-ups, the anti-patriotic and illegal extraditions, the violation of all our rights. We are ready to confront the traitors."

A seven-hour, 418-kilometre drive from Medellín, the southern city of Cali, presented an opportunity as much as a threat to Escobar's empire. The rivalry between Los Caballeros de Cali (the Gentlemen of Cali) began with beef in New York City over a woman. One trafficker, allied to Pablo, murdered a trafficker who was allied to Pacho Herrera, a Cali cartel honcho. In Colombian tradition, it's an eye for an eye when retribution and revenge are on the table. The settling of accounts means blood can – and must – be spilled. For a time, Escobar and the Gentlemen cooperated in a way that was mutually beneficial, but those days were gone. Pablo wanted to take the Big Apple, and nobody was going to oppose him. The Cali bosses began to represent a threat, and this exceedingly unimportant friction caused by two hot-headed nobodies in NYC became an aggrandised struggle between rival outfits. "This is war and I'm going to kill every one of you sons of bitches," Pablo told Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela, the de facto leader of the Cali cartel, over the phone during a conference.

> At the height of its operation, the Medellín outfit supplied 80 per cent of the world's cocaine

The Gentlemen threw gasoline onto the fire, when they planted a car bomb in the parking garage of a posh residence used by Pablo's family. His wife and two kids were soundly sleeping in the penthouse when the blast rocked the building, leaving two security guards dead and a gigantic crater. The tit-for-tat attacks continued, until the Rodríguez brothers funded British mercenaries to attack Hacienda Nápoles. The harebrained scheme came to a crash – literally. On their way for a showdown with El Patrón, one of the choppers carrying the equipment and soldiers of fortune crashed into a fog-smothered hillside, the whole saga a wasted opportunity – an expensive one. Another option, a while later, was to hit La Catedral, the prison Escobar had built to house him and his sicarios, after he'd finally turned himself over to the government and pledged to do a bit of time on ridiculous charges, which meant nothing more than a slap on the wrist.

Pablo was no caged animal, and he was seen frequently out and about in the city, shopping or attending football matches at Atanasio Girardot Stadium, home to his beloved Atlético Nacional.

Then a move was made by Gaviria, which led to the downfall of Escobar. More blood would be spilled nailing him, but by then a few more corpses didn't matter very much, if the cost was ending Escobar. The president ordered Pablo to be moved to a new prison, and fresh charges laid. This time, El Patrón was going to pay. The charade of justice would be replaced by true justice. When Escobar got wind of the plot, he fled with his loyal sicarios into the night. Given La Catedral was supposed to be surrounded by the police and military, Pablo's Houdini act riled the Americans. Was everybody in Colombia on the take and in the pocket of the cartels, they wondered? The raid on La Catedral in June 1991 was farcical. Escobar was gone, but he was now on the run and would remain on the run until the end of his days, ordering fresh attacks against his arch-enemies. Yet even when reduced to the state of a bandit hiding in the hills, in the fincas (safe houses) in the countryside, he was working in secret with the attorney general, Gustavo de Greiff, to seek a deal with the government that would stop his extradition to the US and help save his family from circling vultures. But this was all delusional, desperate, as the plot to capture Pablo Escobar was not about justice anymore – it was a seek-and-destroy mission that would only end with a bullet behind the ear and a true end to the madness he'd instigated and unleashed onto the country he professed to love.

"Viva Colombia! We have just killed Pablo Escobar!" Major Aguilar bellowed into the walkie-talkie, directing

The life and crimes of El Patrón Timeline

1949

Born into violence
Escobar is born in Rionegro on 1 December 1949, during a bloody ten-year civil war known as La Violencia.
1 Dec 1949

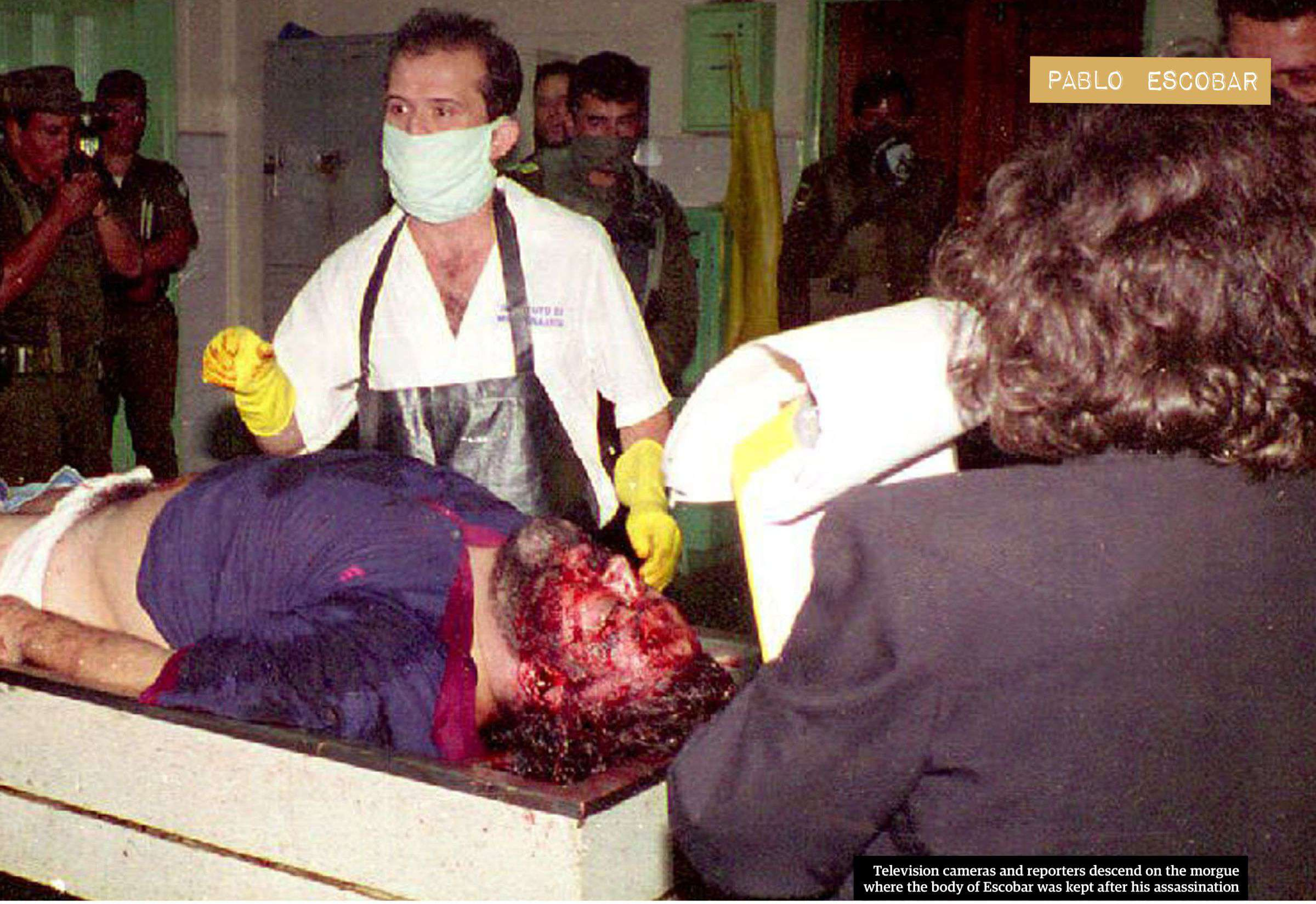
A life of crime
Pablo graduates from small-time rackets to drug-dealing in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Eye on politics
Escobar enters the Colombian Chamber of Representatives as an alternate councilman. He doesn't last long.
1982

M-19 Palace Siege
Left-wing guerrilla group M-19 storms the Palace of Justice. Escobar allegedly funded this assault on democracy.
6 Nov 1985

Luis Galán assassinated
Self-declared enemy of the Colombia cartels, presidential candidate Luis Galán is assassinated by Escobar's sicarios.
18 August 1989

The war on drugs
The US gives hundreds of millions to Colombian authorities to fight cartels and left-wing guerrilla outfits.
1980s and 1990s



Television cameras and reporters descend on the morgue where the body of Escobar was kept after his assassination

his message to Search Bloc's El Jefe, Hugo Martínez, the man tasked with assassinating El Doctor. It was in fact Martínez's son - a radio expert - who had zeroed in on the Los Olivos residence in Medellín. Martínez Jr was shocked to see Escobar carelessly standing by a window, speaking to his wife on the phone. They had spent the last year and a half monitoring phone lines, using the latest technology all the US dollars could buy. It was 2 December 1993, a day after Pablo's 44th birthday, a day he'd spent holed up with his one remaining sicario, known as Limón.

The skirmish had been short, and Escobar was gunned down on the rooftop of an apartment building. He was barefoot, so suddenly had the Search Bloc attacked. To humiliate the corpse, one solider trimmed Escobar's moustache, to make it look like Hitler's. Thousands attended the funeral, and his grave site is still visited to this day. Artworks around the city, especially the barrios, portray El Doctor as a man who did more than the government to help them, casually overlooking his monumental list of crimes. Pablo Escobar was no 'Paisa Robin Hood' - he was a murderous psychopath who terrorised a nation for several decades. The only way to stop him was to snuff him out. In the annals of gangster history and the ultra-violent narco wars, there was nobody like Pablo Escobar. He was definitely - defiantly - unique.

Sent to prison
Escobar surrenders to Colombian authorities and agrees to do jail time. He builds his own prison, known as La Catedral.
19 June 1991

Search Bloc hunt
Escobar and his minions escape La Catedral. He spends the rest of his life on the run.
22 July 1992

Los Pepes campaign
A paramilitary death squad (Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar) mounts a campaign against Escobar, wiping out friends, family and associates.
1992-1993

Pablo's crumbling empire
The government finally acts against Escobar, and his once-mighty empire begins to crumble and rivals begin to circle in.
1992-1993

Seek and destroy
The Search Bloc and Los Pepes search for Pablo throughout 1992-1993. The official government policy is to seek and assassinate.
1992-1993

Exit El Patrón
Discovered in the Los Olivos neighbourhood in Medellín, Escobar is finally killed by Search Bloc forces.
2 December 1993

The Krays

They ruled a criminal empire built on violence, terror and extortion and yet the Kray twins still enjoy an almost hallowed reputation

The infamous twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray developed a taste for violence at an early age. Born in October 1933, they grew up in London's East End as it recovered from the Blitz, running in gangs that scrapped with their rivals among the rubble, and earning themselves a fearful reputation as boxers and as street-brawlers. "People called us the Terrible Twins," recalled Ronnie.

During their teens, that terror was visited upon a 16-year-old lad called Harvey with whom they fought outside Barry's Dance Hall in Hackney. Not only was he punched and kicked all over but he was also been beaten with bicycle chains. Even at this age the twins loved vicious weapons – knives, coshes, Ronnie even carried a cutlass in later years – and they were always willing to use them.

The twins were arrested after the attack and at the preliminary hearing the magistrate examined the chains that the police had discovered nearby "in pools of clotted blood" and declared that the "beasts" who had used them clearly thought they were above the law. The twins were remanded in custody for trial at the Old Bailey, the magistrate saying that they would be taught a lesson.

The twins did indeed learn a lesson - though not in the way the magistrate intended. They learned that they could take on the law, and that they could win. In the weeks leading up to trial a female witness to the beating was told that if she testified she would have her face sliced up with a razor. A male witness was similarly warned while Harvey, recovering in his hospital bed, was told that he should adhere to the East End code of silence when talking to the law. The case was swiftly dismissed on the grounds of insufficient evidence. The Kray twins knew how they would operate. They were ready to start their careers as the kings of the London underworld.

After enduring a tumultuous time in the Army when conscripted for National Service – they were eventually court martialed – the twins set their sights on the Regal, a rundown billiard hall in Mile End, for which they acquired the lease. From here they laid the foundations for their criminal enterprise, offering 'protection' to other East End establishments and defending their territory with explosive acts of violence. When a Maltese gang came calling, demanding protection money from the Regal's new owners, the twins went after them with cutlasses.

It was during their time at the Regal, where Ronnie would take great pleasure in organising their assaults on other gangs, that he earned the nickname 'the colonel'. It was also at this point that Reggie developed his notorious 'cigarette punch' where he'd offer a man a smoke and then, when the recipient opened his mouth to accept it, clobber him on the side of his face with his powerful left fist. The move was a guaranteed jawbreaker.

© Getty

CEDRA COURT

Defining moment

The beating of Terry Martin

One of the Kray's allies stabbed the Watney Street gang's Martin with a bayonet. Martin refused to be silent and Ronnie was prosecuted for the attack, getting three years for GBH.

Winter 1956

NORTH EASTERN CRIMINAL RECORD OFFICE
CRIMINAL RECORD

A firearm and criminal record belonging to Ronnie Kray displayed at the 'Met Crime Museum Uncovered' exhibition in 2015

Ronnie Kray: certified insane

Ronnie Kray's sadistic lust for violence had long suggested some kind of mental imbalance, even before he began suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. As young children the twins had fallen ill with measles and diphtheria and though both recovered, their mother recognised that Ronnie was never the same afterwards. He became slower and shyer than Reggie, and was prone to more violent mood swings. It was while serving his three-year sentence in 1956 for GBH, however, that Ronnie was first diagnosed with mental illness.

He was transferred from Wandsworth to Camp Hill on the Isle of Wight, a more relaxed prison environment, though here Ronnie felt cut off from his family visits and the ring of contacts he had built up during the early part of his incarceration. His mental health declined and he became introverted and unkempt. Paranoia raged and eventually he snapped, launching an unprovoked attack on his fellow inmates. He was sedated and wrapped in a straitjacket.

At the psychiatric unit at Winchester Gaol he was diagnosed as 'certified insane'. After transfer to Long Grove hospital doctors decided he might be a paranoid schizophrenic. He continued to see doctors and psychiatrists when freed, and it was no surprise that when convicted of murder he was officially diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, in 1979. He lived out the rest of his days, heavily sedated, in Broadmoor high-security psychiatric hospital.

In
Loving Memory
RONALD KRAY
BORN 24th OCTOBER 1933
DIED 17th MARCH 1995
REGINALD KRAY
BORN 24th OCTOBER 1933
DIED 1st OCTOBER 2000
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord;
and let perpetual light shine on them

The twins' funerary monument at Chingford Mount Cemetery still attracts visitors to this day

The Krays loved showbiz glamour, with Ronnie (right) posing here with actress Barbara Windsor at El Morroco nightclub in 1965

From the Regal their reputation spread, and the billiard hall became a refuge for all types of shady individuals. The twins had many connections and if there was trouble somewhere in the East End, they knew all about it. Soon the billiard hall was offering its services as something of a private members club for criminals, with lockers under seats for their tools, and space round the back where robbers could temporarily stash their loot. The twins organised transport and brought potential colluders together, always ensuring that they got a cut of any successful enterprise.

By 1956 their gang of toughs, consisting of London hard men, several Scottish heavies, and a clutch of bent businessmen, had become known as 'The Firm', and Ronnie, 'the colonel', liked to marshal its activities with near-military-style forethought. They promoted their brand of extreme violence – Ronnie branded the jewel thief Lenny Hamilton with a white-hot poker and shot a docker in the leg with his Luger – and this burnished their rising reputation.

Always attracted by the bright lights of glamour and show business, the twins took over their first club, the Double R, in 1957, and looked to expand into the West End. In 1960, their interaction with the violent, scamming landlord Peter Rachman saw them acquire the prestigious Esmeralda's Barn gambling club in Knightsbridge. The twins felt as if they were hitting the big time, even though many hardened gangsters looked down upon them as bullies and show-offs.

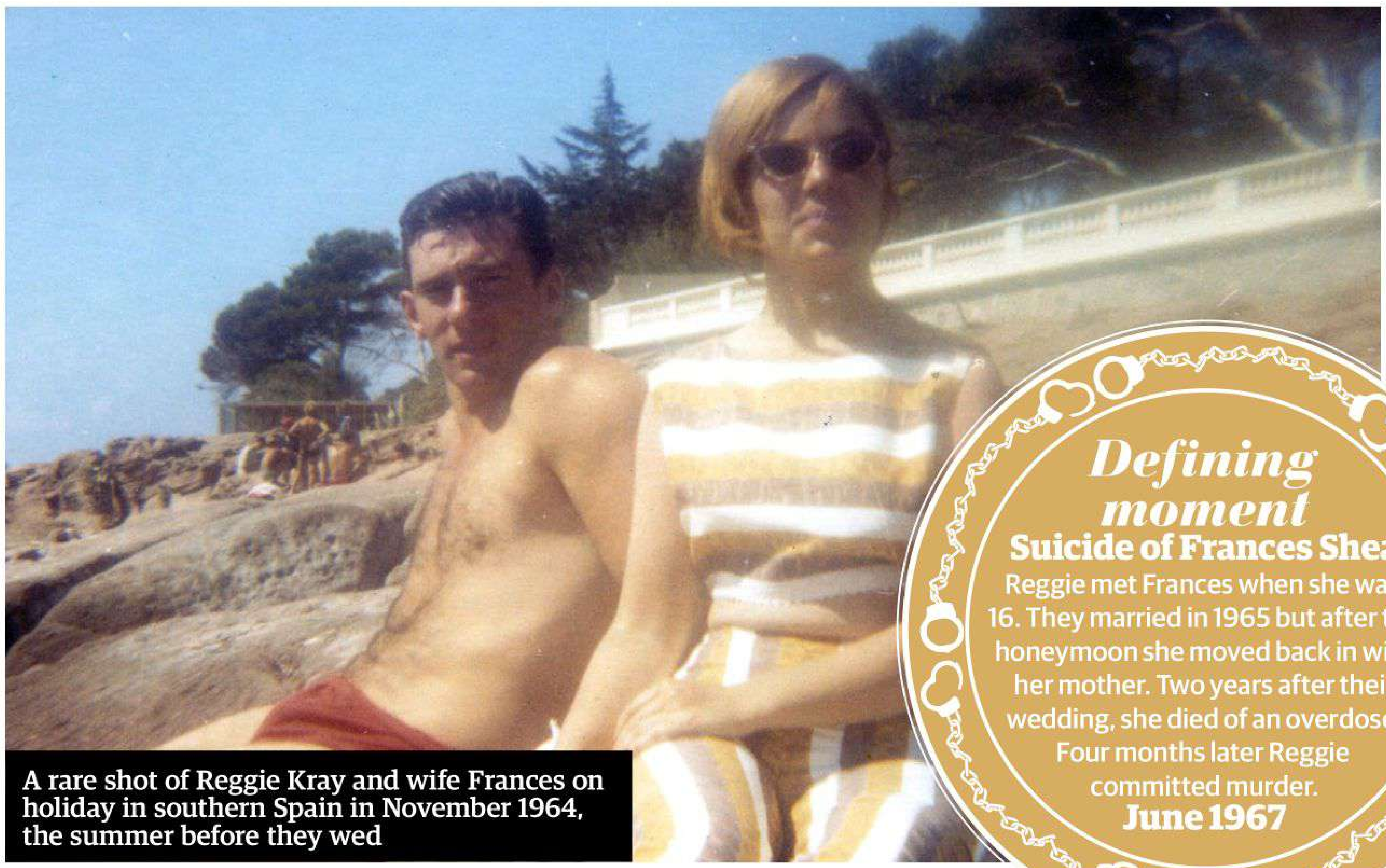
For many criminals, keeping a low profile is paramount, but that was not for the Krays. They revelled in the attention they received and loved to entertain celebrities at their nightspots, whether George Raft, star of 1932's gangster picture *Scarface*, or glamorous actresses such as Judy Garland, Diana Dors and Barbara Windsor. The twins had been accomplished boxers in their youth and rubbed shoulders with the likes of Sonny Liston, whom they invited to their next venue, the Cambridge Rooms. The celebrity photographer David Bailey took their picture on more than one occasion.

"Show business stars have always been attracted to the underworld," wrote Reggie, "and I've had many dealings with the stars over the years." The link to celebrity and the hip realm of the Swinging Sixties did much to enhance the Krays' reputations, adding a glitzy sheen to their otherwise violent lives, and helping to establish their credibility with the general public.

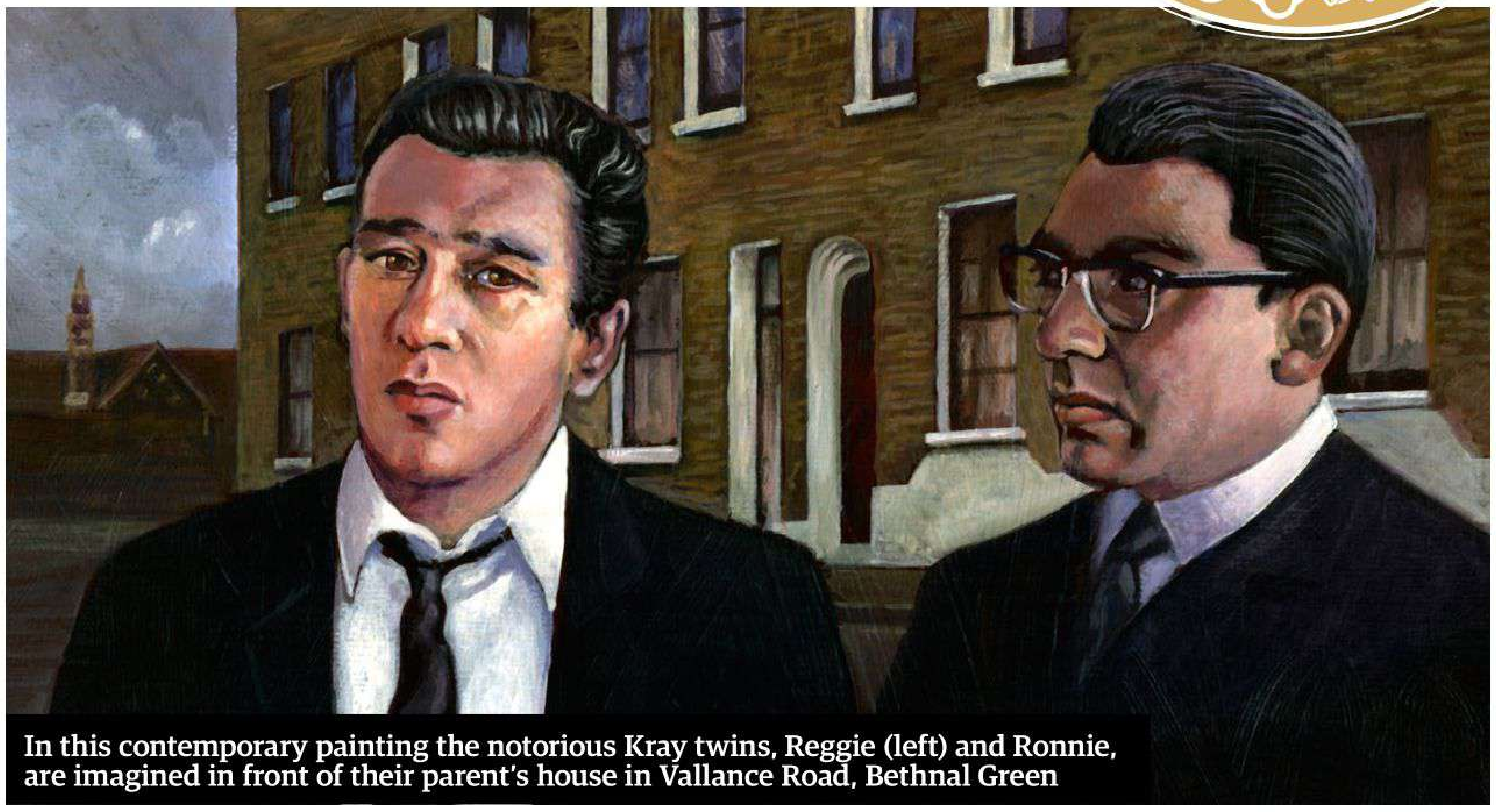
In their bid to look respectable, the Krays also courted politicians and established bonds with Lord Boothby, a Conservative politician, and the Labour MP Tom Driberg. Like Ronnie, both men were practising homosexuals (which was still a criminal offence at the time) and in July 1964 the Krays were the focus of press attention courtesy of an exposé in the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper, which insinuated that Ronnie had conceived a sexual relationship with Boothby.

This played to the twins' advantage. The newspaper backed down, sacked its editor, apologised, and paid Lord Boothby £40,000 in an out-of-court settlement. And not only did the press attention bring the Krays even further into the limelight, but both the media and the police force were deterred from investigating their activities further amid allegations that the twins were being unfairly targeted.

In truth, whenever the police had tried to gather evidence against the Krays, they invariably ran into a wall of silence. Criminals, on the whole, refused to talk, and those that were tempted knew better than to incur the twins' wrath. Documents



A rare shot of Reggie Kray and wife Frances on holiday in southern Spain in November 1964, the summer before they wed



In this contemporary painting the notorious Kray twins, Reggie (left) and Ronnie, are imagined in front of their parent's house in Vallance Road, Bethnal Green

THE BLIND BEGGAR

Ronnie shot George Cornell in the head at the Blind Beggar pub, seen here in 2005

Defining moment

Suicide of Frances Shea

Reggie met Frances when she was 16. They married in 1965 but after the honeymoon she moved back in with her mother. Two years after their wedding, she died of an overdose. Four months later Reggie committed murder.

June 1967

released in 2001 included a Metropolitan Police memo from former Detective Superintendent Tommy Butler, which said that during the Sixties, the Krays' reputation was such "that not one victim can be persuaded to give evidence against anyone connected with their organisation".

With the press and police turning a blind eye, the Krays felt invulnerable and from 1964 until their eventual arrest in May 1968, imposed a bloody reign of violence on the London underworld, which culminated in the murder of two other gangsters. The first was George Cornell, who had once beaten Ronnie up (when the Kray was drunk) and had infuriated him by calling him a "fat poof". Ronnie was never one to let an insult slide and, while openly homosexual, always insisted, "I am not a poof".

Ronnie had already been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic when on 9 March 1966, he walked into the Blind Beggar pub and shot Cornell in the head in front of shocked witnesses. The following year, Jack 'the Hat' McVitie, a member of their own Firm, found himself on the twins' wrong side and Reggie stabbed him in the face and body during a party in Stoke Newington. Reggie, who up until this point had never enjoyed violence quite as much as his brother, kept on stabbing McVitie as he lay dying on the kitchen floor.

Though they thought themselves untouchable, dogged police work by Detective Chief Superintendent Leonard 'Nipper' Read eventually saw the twins brought to trial for the two murders and in the longest murder trial in English legal history at that time, the twins were convicted and were told they'd serve at least 30 years each. Their older brother, Charlie, got seven years.

Though prison curtailed their criminality it did not extinguish it entirely and it was while behind bars that they worked on their legacy, commissioning authors, writing their own books and giving numerous interviews, as they sought to perpetuate the myth that they were like latter-day Robin Hoods. They were anything but benevolent outlaws though the newspapers fanned the flames of their celebrity, and many in the East End of London learned to look on these wayward sons with parochial pride.

Ronnie died in 1995 in Broadmoor, while Reggie died in 2000 a few months after his compassionate release from Wayland, though the fascination with these gangland killers remains undimmed. A feature film was made with their blessing and released in 1990 (with the Kemp brothers from Spandau Ballet playing the twins), while 2015 saw the release of a second major movie (Tom Hardy playing a dual role). Lower budget feature and documentary films have also been released; tourists can take an organised stroll through their old stomping grounds, while there is even a museum full of their artefacts in Gloucestershire. The legend of the Terrible Twins lives on.

> "Always attracted by the bright lights of glamour and show business, the twins took over their first club in 1957"

© Getty

Robin Hood

Hero, archer, lover, poacher, murderer, thief, vagabond… The story of Robin Hood has taken many forms through the ages, but is there any truth in the legend?

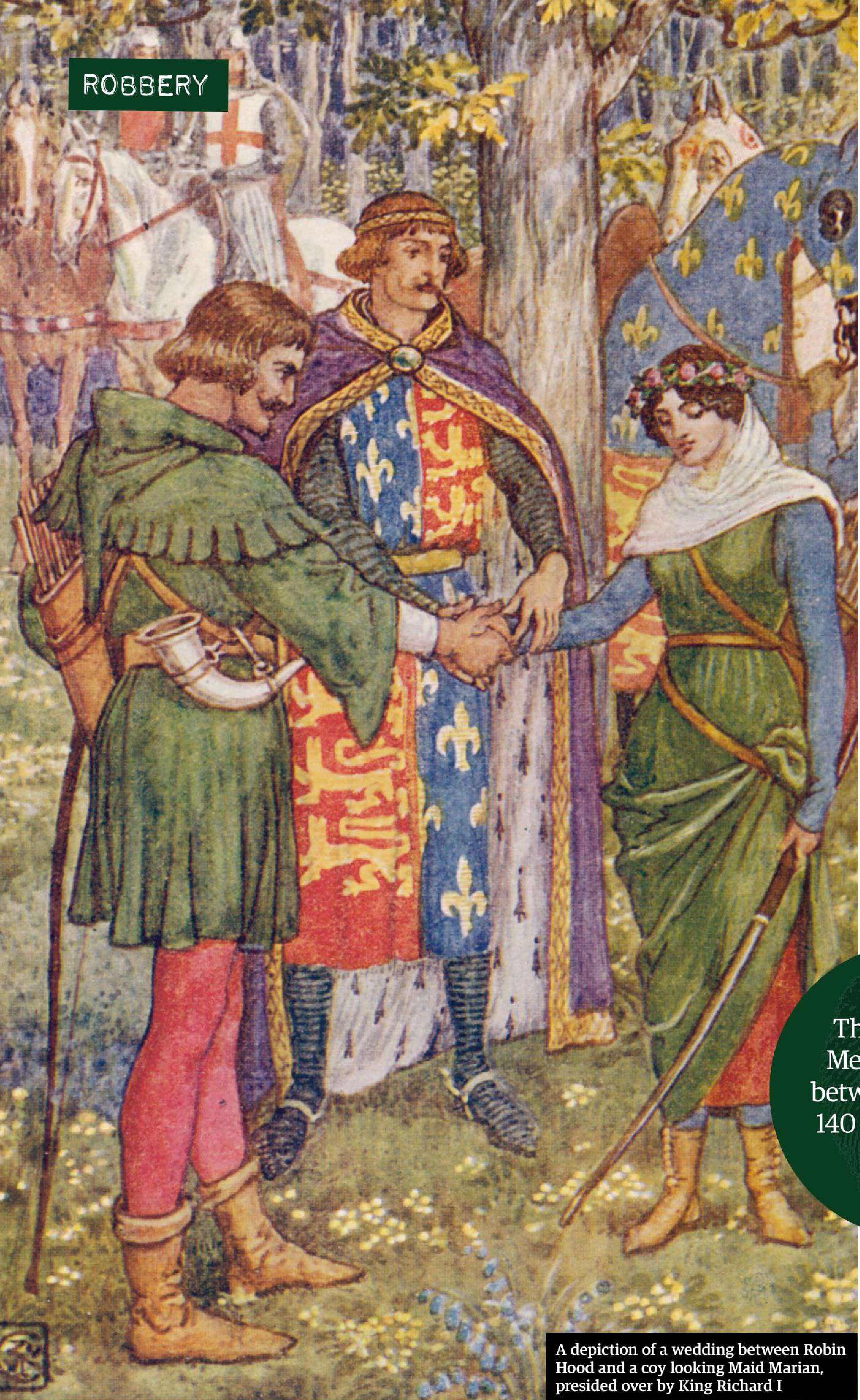
Robin Hood; maybe you've heard of him? Medieval lovable rogue-type chap with green tights, good with arrows (and women), lives in a hideout in Sherwood Forest with a band of jolly outlaws where they fleece greedy travelling rich folk of their cash under the threat of violence, before sending them packing. His generosity to the downtrodden is renowned and he's loved by the common folk, hated by the wealthy and powerful and he's a devil with the ladies, if you know what we mean – especially high-born damsels trapped in their metaphorical towers (or actual towers, depending on the story). He doesn't see eye-to-eye with corrupt authority figures either but don't think that Robin Hood is anything but a loyal and patriotic Englishman: everything he does, he does for his country and the rightful king, Richard I of England, who's off fighting a noble crusade against evil heathens, thousands of miles away.

Sherwood Forest covered around 100,000 acres in the time of Robin Hood and was home to his hideout, the Major Oak

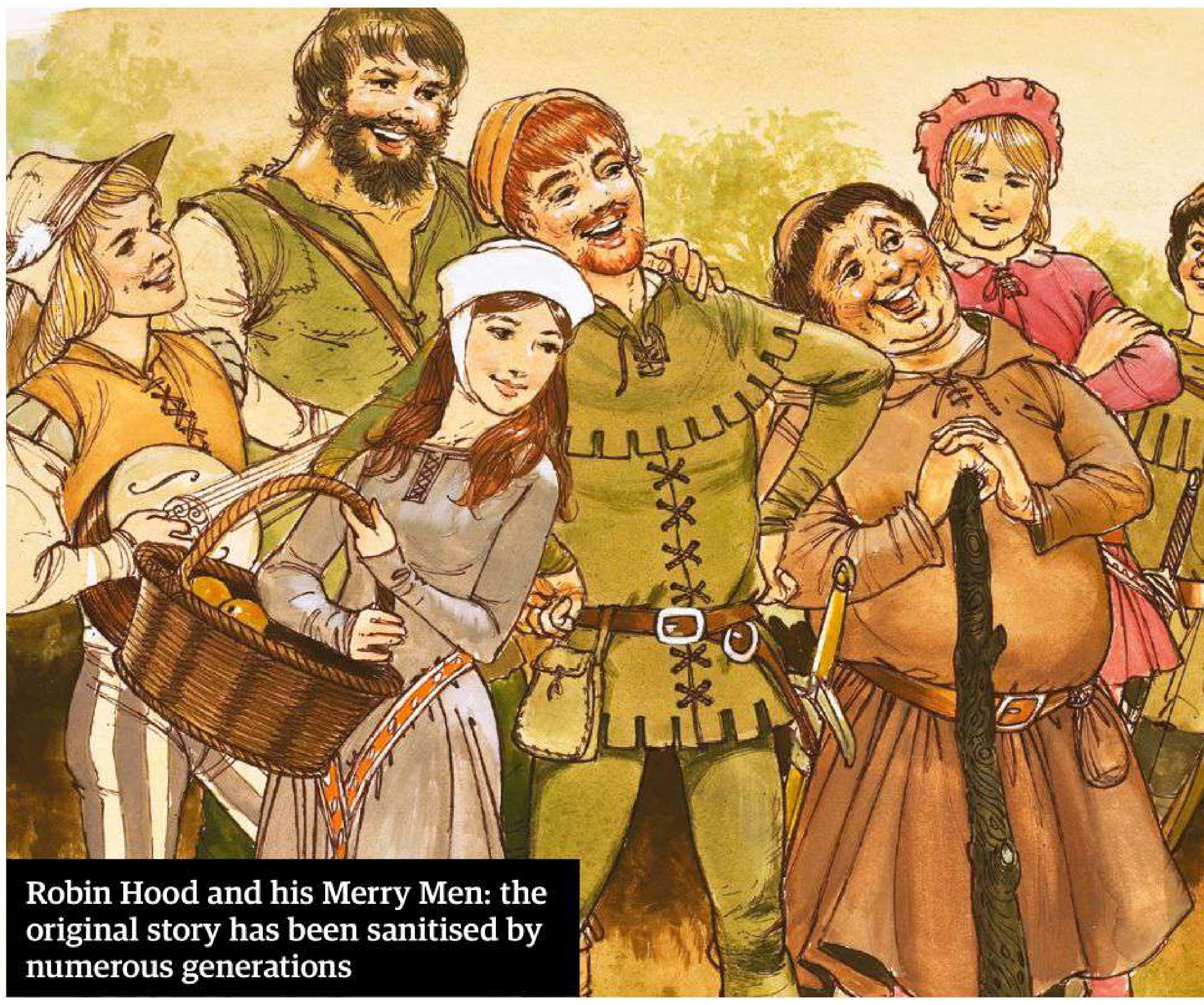
No one blindly believes the story of Robin Hood as we know it today, but long periods of English history have had a funny habit of recycling these tales until it's hard to tell fact from fiction, or what the original truth was – if it wasn't a complete fabrication to begin with. Like a giant, generational game of Chinese whispers, the legend of Robin Hood has been passed along the popular media of the times with a bit of embellishment added here, something considered dark, unflattering or politically unsavoury removed there. And so, via the 20th century's communication revolution, it has boomed into world fame.

In the last few decades we've been adding our own tint to this rose-hued tale of the arrow-slinging rebel, like the stories of Russell Crowe's disaffected soldier, Kevin Costner's noble Prince of Thieves and Errol Flynn's jubilant swashbuckling rogue. If we're going to sort some fact from fiction here, we have to unravel the Hollywood-spun Batman of the Middle Ages back to where it began, sometime in the 12th century, and look at the direct origin of today's tale.

The legend himself, if not the tales, can be traced all the way back to the time of King John of England, who was born in 1166 and reigned from 1199 until his death in 1216. These ballads and stories were born and cultivated out of an era of social upheaval. The end of King John's reign saw the English barony revolt and the signing of the Magna Carta, which was the first step along a long road to the breakdown of the ancient feudal system of government. While characters like Maid Marian appeared in tales from a later date, some of Robin's band of 'Merry Men' can be clearly identified at this time, but things get a lot murkier when it comes to the titular hero.



A depiction of a wedding between Robin Hood and a coy looking Maid Marian, presided over by King Richard I



Robin Hood and his Merry Men: the original story has been sanitised by numerous generations

According to one of the more recent theories backed by, among others, historian David Baldwin, Robin Hood's real identity was that of a 13th-century farmer called Robert Godberd, whose escapades were far from the sugar-coated tales we see today. The crimes him and his band of outlaws around Nottinghamshire and nearby counties were accused of were of the brutal era in which he lived: burglaries, arson, assaulting clergymen and murdering travellers. The nature of their law-breaking has slowly been eroded throughout history to suit an increasingly gentile audience, compared with a medieval population accustomed to violence and who found Godberg's activities entirely palatable. Godberg and his fellow brigands were in defiance of a tyrant who had an iron grip on the extensive forested regions of Nottinghamshire. King John enforced the enormously unpopular Forest Law, which allowed the royal court exclusive access to vast swathes of hunting grounds, with utter ruthlessness. Thus, morally speaking, Godberg's actions were justified by the common man as necessary for the greater good of the people.

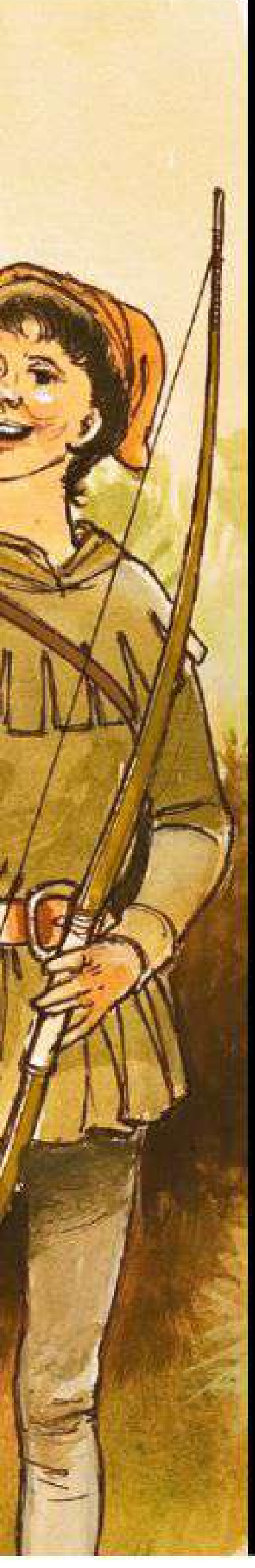
There are a number of other recorded Robin Hood-type characters with similar names and lives that span a period of 150 years or so during this time. The earliest is Robert Hod of Cirencester, a serf who lived in the household of an abbot in Gloucestershire. He murdered a visiting dignitary early in the 13th century, fled with his accomplices and was outlawed by King John's reviled minister Gerard of Athee. Four other Robert Hods existed in 1265, at the Battle of Evesham during King Henry's time. Each became fugitives and outlaws for various reasons, including robbing travellers and raiding an abbey in Yorkshire, which could explain how the character of Friar Tuck eventually made his appearance in later tales. Later versions, namely two Robyn Hods, appeared respectively

The number of Merry Men vary between three and 140 depending on the tale

The fair maiden

Who was Maid Marian and was there any truth in her legend? When did she first enter the stories?

Maid Marian is more a complete fabrication than an embellished character. As a love-match and soul mate to Robin Hood, she popped onto the scene sometime in the 16th century and was likely derived from a 15th-century character: the Lady of May Day. This popular festival was a yearly tradition in the Middle Ages but it took several generations of storytelling before Marian and Robin were brought together. In fact, the increased popularity of the story of Robin Hood was probably brought about by three plays that are known to have been written for the May Day festivities: *Robin Hood and the Sheriff*, *Robin Hood and the Friar* and *Robin Hood and the Potter*. It is small wonder really, that some bard would eventually pen a romance between the dashing rebel and the fictional May Day queen.



Who were the Merry Men?

Where did they come from and what were the skills that made them an important member of Robin Hood's gang?

LITTLE JOHN

Character: Burly lieutenant
Special skill: Staff-swinging
He's one the first men to be recruited into Robin Hood's band in modern stories and he was one of the first mentioned in the ballads of yore, too. Little John was a loyal, intelligent and, of course, strong man in poet Andrew of Wyntoun's lore. He was the only one of the Merry Men supposed to be present when Robin died and he's thought to be buried in Derbyshire.

WILL SCARLET

Character: Vain swordsman
Special skill: Wielding blades
There's been much confusion over William Scarlet's character and his plethora of names over the centuries, with one bard even including both a Scarlock and a Scarlet character in his work. He was still the youngest of the Merry Men in medieval versions of the Robin Hood story, but he liked to dress in finery and was also the most able swordsman, besting even Mr Hood himself.

MUCH THE MILLER'S SON

Character: Wily boy
Special skill: Poaching
This sneaky character has fallen into obscurity in favour of other characters in modern adaptations of Robin Hood but Much, or Midge as he's also known, appears in the oldest of the known Robin Hood ballads. A poacher caught killing a deer on the Sheriff's land, he escaped punishment and became an outlaw in his gang.

FRIAR TUCK

Character: Drunken holy man
Special skill: Holding his drink
If the legend as it appears today is to be taken at face value, Friar Tuck is a boozy and wily character who still has his heart in the right place. His character is thought to derive from a certain 15th-century Robert Stafford from Sussex, and he entered the story of Robin Hood's exploits at the same time as Maid Marian did, during the May Day festivities in the 15th and 16th centuries.

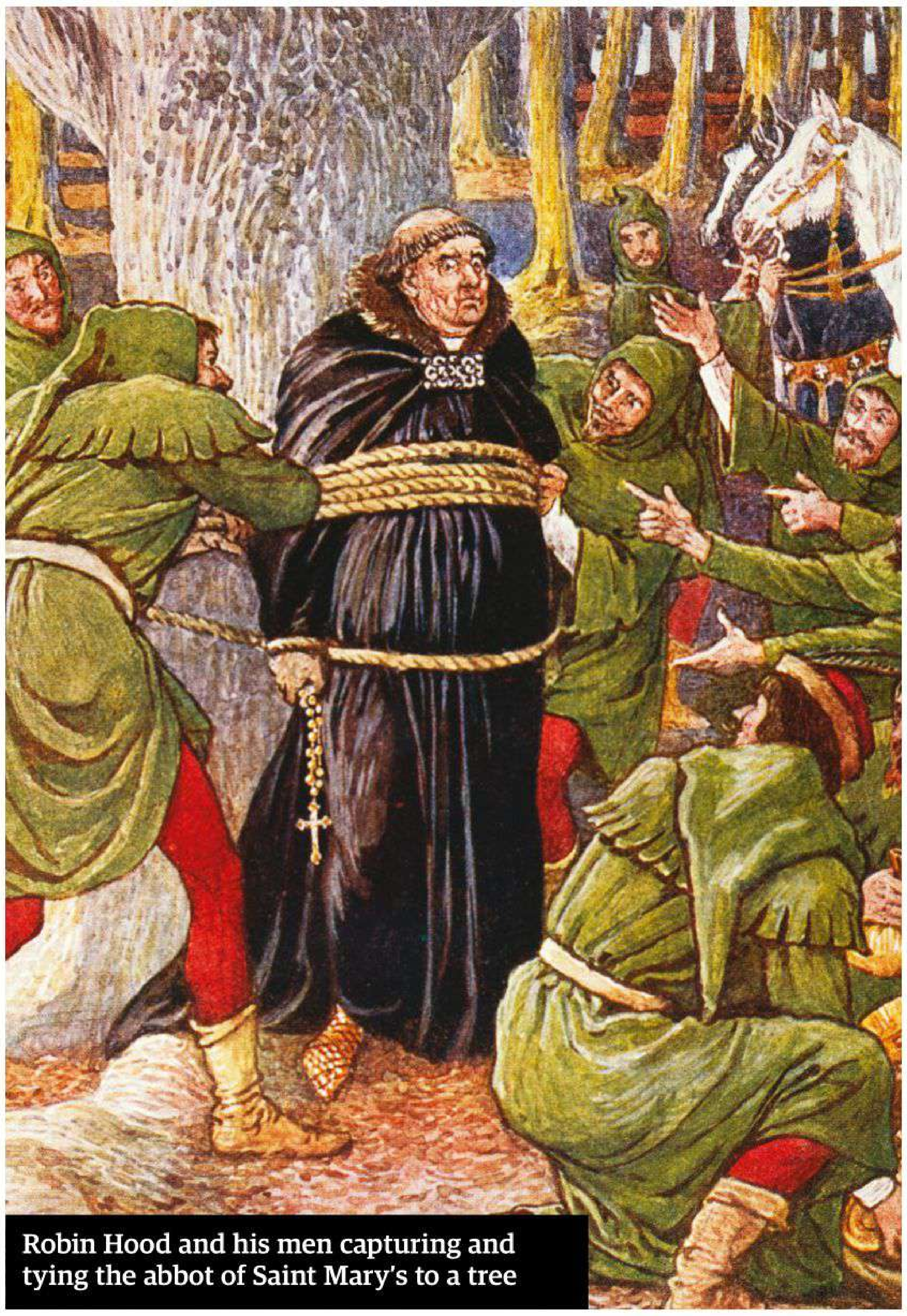
"In the last few decades we've been adding our own tint to this rose-hued tale of the arrow-slinging rebel"

as an archer in a garrison on the Isle of Wight and as a man jailed for trespassing in the King's Forest and poaching deer in 1354. The name Robert was a common one around this time, while the surname Hod or Hode likely came from the old English word for a head covering. It's also possible his surname was derived from the story of 'Robin of the Wood'.

With the array of similar characters and names of people who existed at this time it's not surprising that historians have trouble pinning the character's origin on any one man. The earliest surviving ballads of the Robin Hood story don't even elaborate on his exploits: they make no mention of the troubles of the time, Robin Hood's cause or the years he was active, simply that he was an outlaw who lived in and around Sherwood or Barnsdale. To further confuse things, there are numerous accounts of outlaws in the 13th and 14th centuries adopting the name of Robin Hood and Little John, which suggests the story had achieved some popularity even then, although adopting the name of a famous outlaw - fictional or otherwise - was common among criminals at this time.

This Robin Hood had no spouse or family, no land and certainly no title. No reason is given for his criminality and his characteristics were likely drawn from some real-life outlaws of the time. One of the most telling aspects of these stories is the language they were written in: up until 1362, when Parliament decreed that English was to be used in court, French was widely spoken in the country - whereas even the earliest stories of Robin are in English, which helps establish a date.

By the 14th and 15th centuries, the tales of Robin Hood had gained some fame as they were disseminated in the traditional May Day festivities, while his story had begun to be written into plays and ballads. There's no mention of the folk hero living at the time of King John, but he can be found in the 15th-century stories of *Robin Hood and the Monk, The Lyttle Geste of Robyn Hode, Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne, Robin Hood and the Curtal Friar* and *Robin Hoode his Death*. The plays *Robin Hood and the Friar* and *Robin Hood and the Potter* were written specifically for the May Day Games in 1560 and were based on ballads of the same name. During this period, his Merry Men began to accrete together from various sources as Robin was embellished with details like so many layers of varnish. Word of the character had began to spread beyond the counties of the midlands and in the late-15th century, he is referred to in plays written as far afield as Somerset and Reading. He was well known even to the famous womanising, warmongering king of England, Henry VIII, and his royal court. The young monarch's idea of celebrating May Day involved walking into Queen Catherine of Aragon's chambers with his nobles, "apparelled in short cotes of Kentish Kendal, with hodes on their heddes, and hosen of the same, every one of them his bowe and arrowes, and a sworde and a bucklar, like outlawes, or Robyn Hode's men," according to *Hall's Chronicle* by Edward Hall, a 16th-century scholar.


Robin Hood and his men capturing and tying the abbot of Saint Mary's to a tree

By the late-16th century, the Merry Men had acquired a friar, Robin had a love interest and he'd also gained nobility. Playwright Anthony Munday wrote two plays on the outlaw, *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, in which Robin (Robert) has clearly been lofted into high society. Or at least, it was his position to lose: in the plays, Munday makes Robin an earl in the reign of Richard I who is disinherited by the king. Fleeing into the Greenwood, he is followed by the daughter of Robert Fitzwalter, one of the leading barons who rallied against the king, where they fall in love and she changes her name to Maid Marian. King John, angry that his would-be bride has been stolen from him by an outlaw, pursues her in the second play and poisons her at Dunmow Priory.

> "There are numerous accounts of outlaws in the 13th and 14th centuries adopting the name of Robin Hood and Little John"

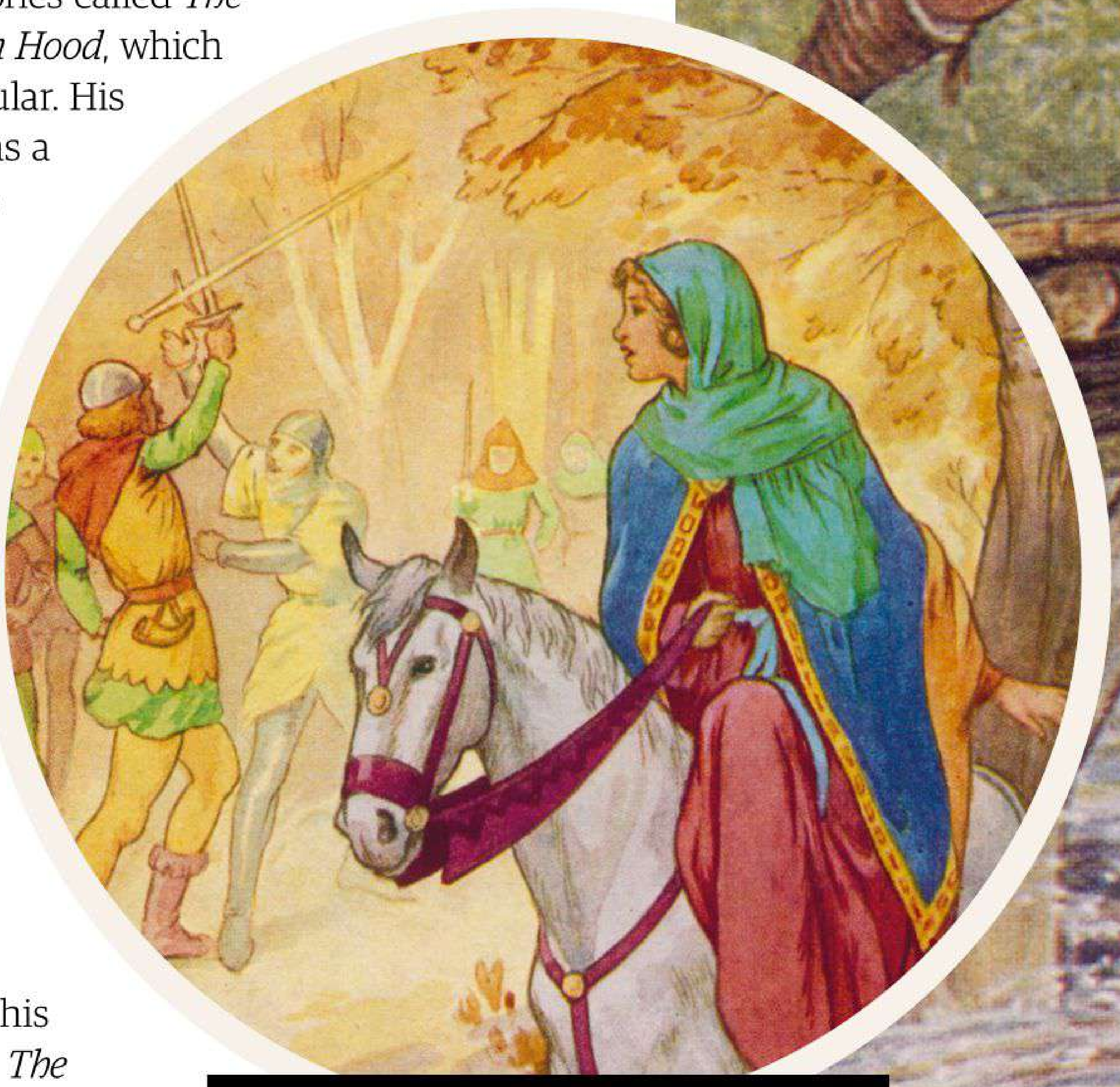
The idea that Robin was a fallen noble and some kind of love triangle existed between King John, Maid Marian and Robin still endures in some stories today. But by introducing a lover and giving him blue blood, the Robin Hood of the 16th century makes the transition from a brutal and often murderous outlaw in defiance of the monarchy to a more domesticated hero, a protagonist the ruling classes could admire and relate to - someone with just cause against an evil ruler. His status as an outlaw had been relegated to a trait that added an element of drama to the story, rather than one that defined it.

From the 16th century onward, with the advent of the printing press, the story of Robin Hood becomes more refined and much more familiar. Across the next few centuries, the character and the stories would pick up traits and themes that generations to come would adopt when turning to their own adaptations.

The 18th-century Robin Hood sees him encounter farcical situations. For example, the ballads of the time talk of a series of tradesmen and professionals getting the upper hand with the hapless outlaw, while the Sheriff of Nottingham is the only one to be bested by Robin. Robin dresses up as a friar in *Robin Hood's Golden Prize* and cheats two priests out of five hundred pounds - nearly $16,000 (£10,000) in today's money - before he's caught and summons the Merry Men with his horn.

The Victorians, notorious for enamelling history with their own style and values, weren't shy about leaving their mark on Robin Hood either. By the mid-19th century, the cost and efficiency of printing books was such that they had become available to the masses. US writer and illustrator Howard Pyle took the traditional folk tale of Robin Hood and adapted it to his own children's version, serialising it into short stories called *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, which became enormously popular. His green-tights vagabond was a moral philanthropist who would go on to spawn a whole century of the people's hero that took from the rich and gave to the poor.

By the time author TH White came along, the story of Robin Hood was among the world's most well known. White took it a step further and, as an author made famous by his Arthurian novels, brought Robin Hood and his Merry Men into his novel *The Sword In The Stone*, which was made

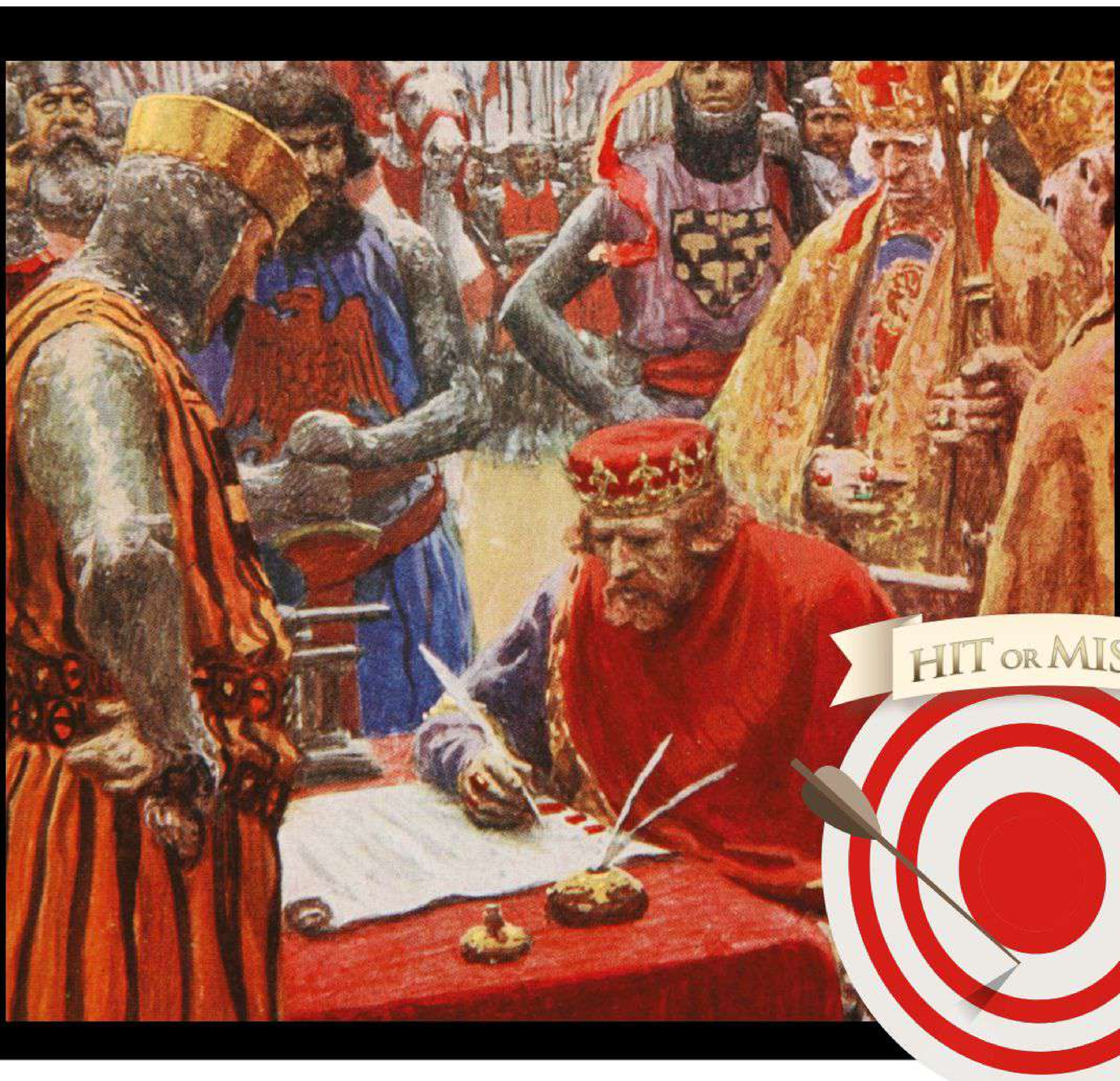


Maid Marian being rescued by Robin Hood

The evil villain?

King John was a real person who raised taxes for Richard's foreign wars. Has history treated him unfairly?

King John was indeed a real person who lived at the same time Robin Hood was purported to be in and around Nottinghamshire, shaking up the status quo. By today's standards, he was a decadent, warmongering, self-serving tyrant who ruled over a turbulent period in British history. He is commonly regarded as a cruel king but the truth of it is that he was a leader of his generation. Him and his predecessors, the Angevin monarchs, operated with relative impunity under the authority of divine majesty: the king was above the law and could therefore do whatever pleased them. King John was a mercurial chap with a penchant for electing men outside the ranks of his barons to the royal court, favouring lesser nobles from the continent and spurning his own, powerful English nobles closer to home, whom he eyed suspiciously for signs of treachery. It was this, in part, that led to the signing of the Magna Carta, the seminal charter that led to constitutional law in England. His barons were sick of his arbitrary rule and insisted that, as a part of the Magna Carta, no free man could be punished by any other law than the law of the land. Of course, the Magna Carta never limited the king's powers in practice and King John only signed it to mollify his barons, but it remains the single most significant act of his reign. But this would have been lost on Robin Hood, the common serfs and farmers of these feudal times who as a general rule, would've feared the king and hated his Forest Law, which would have been mercilessly enforced.



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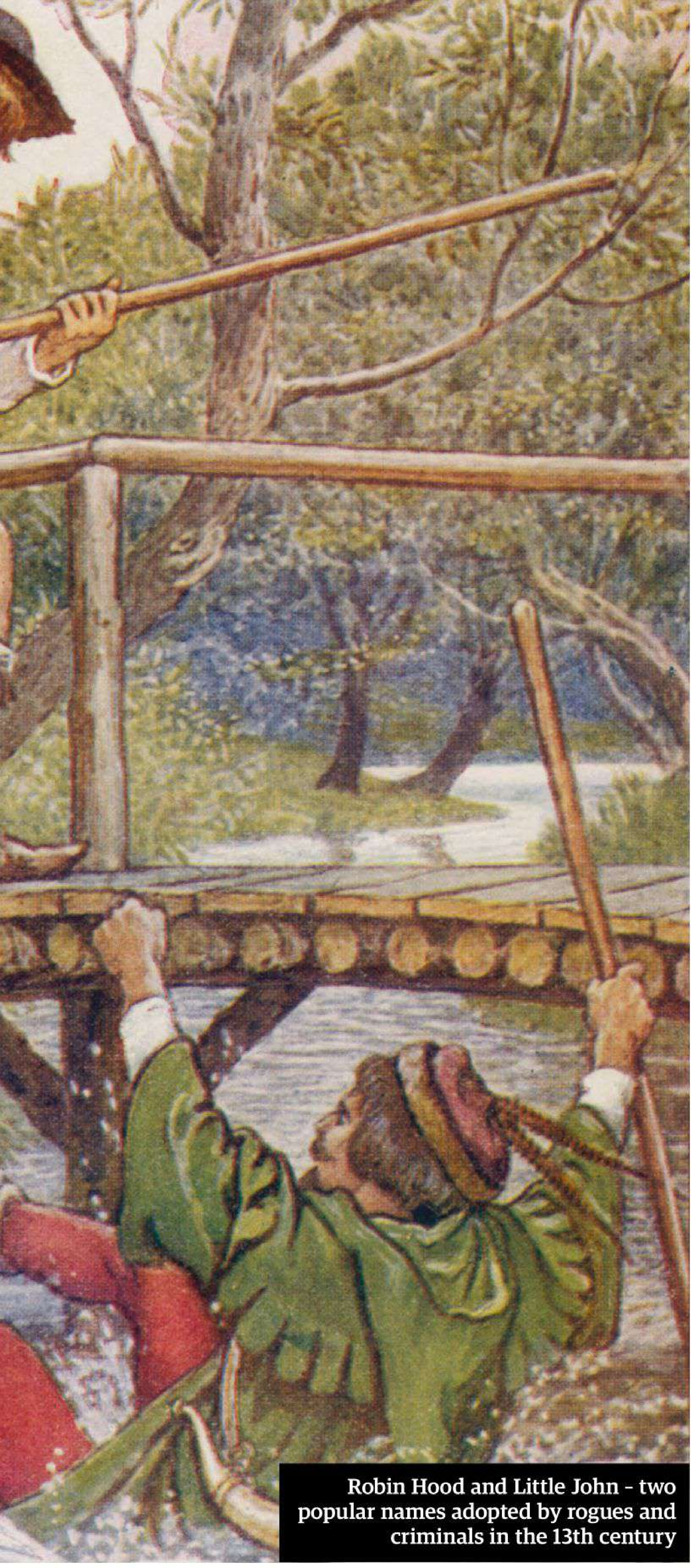


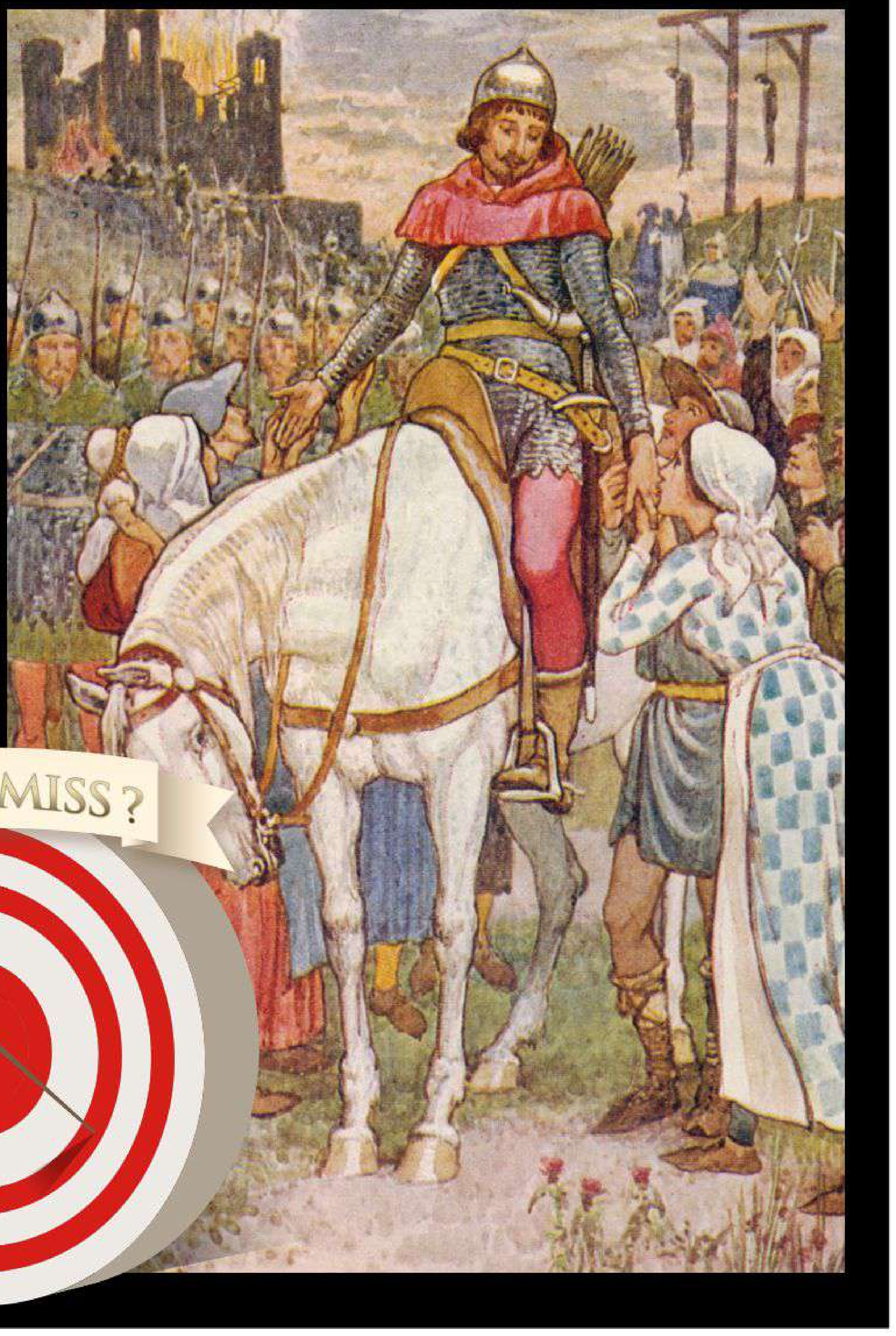
Robin Hood and Little John – two popular names adopted by rogues and criminals in the 13th century

Friend of the poor?

Was Robin Hood as generous as the tales depict him?

If Robin Hood and his Merry Men did exist in the time of King John, it's highly unlikely they would have embarked on the scale of philanthropy portrayed in the modern tale. This idea likely came from an early medieval ballad involving Richard at the Lee, a knight who had fallen upon hard times. His lands were to be forfeited to an abbot because he couldn't repay a loan to the abbey, so Robin gives him money to pay his mortgage. Historian John Paul Davis goes further as to suggest that Robin Hood stole from the rich and lent to the poor, as a kind of medieval loan shark. In his book *Robin Hood: The Unknown Templar*, Davis says that Hood loaned Richard a sum of £400, before stealing it back off the abbot once Richard has paid the abbey back. Victorian-era author Howard Pyle and 20th-century films undoubtedly had a big hand in transforming Hood from a devious bandit into the philanthropist he is today. So did someone named Robin Hood steal from the rich and give to the poor? It is possible, yes. Did he have their best interests at heart? That's as clear as the legend itself.

HIT OR MISS?



> "16th-century Robin Hood makes the transition from a brutal and murderous outlaw in defiance of the monarchy"

into an anthropomorphic Disney film a quarter of a century later.

The late-20th century and the booming phenomenon that was cinema brought with it numerous adaptations, most of which aren't remotely faithful even to the 16th-century versions. The Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn film *Robin and Marian* made much of the romance but for the first time, cast King Richard as a less-than-benevolent character. The *Robin of Sherwood* television series went as far as to add a Muslim character in the form of Nasir the Saracen, a trend the famous Kevin Costner film followed through Morgan Freeman's Azeem.

The character of the lovable rogue has international appeal, so almost every country has its own version of Robin Hood: in Wales, Twm Siôn Cati is likened to Hood as a high-ranking highwayman driven to robbery as an income by his Protestant faith under a Catholic monarch. Ukranian rebel Ustym Karmaliuk made his name in the 19th century for robbing the rich and distributing the proceeds of his crimes to the poor, and over a millennium before Robin Hood came to the fore, Boudica, queen of the Iceni, defied the Romans when they took control of her lands and people. She led a revolt that destroyed a Roman legion and the Roman capital before it was put down. Almost every generation has a story similar to Robin Hood, illustrating the very human need to have a figure who stands for right against wrong, light against dark.

Given that nearly a millennium has passed since the first tale of Robin Hood was told, in addition to his murky origins that even 13th-century bards can't agree on, it's unlikely any historian will be able to settle on who Robin Hood was, or what truth there is to his deeds. As far as history is concerned, the Robin Hood legend has become a victim of its own popularity, obscured by generations of storytelling taking it firmly into the realms of fantasy.

> Before he died, Robin Hood is said to have fired an arrow and told Little John that he would be buried wherever it landed

© Jay wong, Mary Evans, Corbis, Lewis R. Head.

Dick Turpin

Immortalised as the dashing fugitive who rode across the country in a night, the tales are far from the truth of the man behind the legend

History has painted Dick Turpin as a hero of romance – a 'dandy highwayman' handsome enough to make ladies swoon. But, when it comes to this notorious criminal, history has been kind. Turpin had been scarred by smallpox and had a distinctly ordinary face, he did not ride from London to York on a horse called Black Bess, and to describe him as a 'highwayman' is not strictly accurate – he did not take to stopping coaches until later in his 'career'.

Dick Turpin was a cattle thief, robber and murderer who would not shy away from assaulting women if he had to. For it he ended up dangling at the end of a rope. This false 'romantic' reputation was bestowed upon him by William Harrison Ainsworth, a novelist of the 19th century who turned Turpin into a hero in his novel *Rookwood*. Over the years, many films have also made Turpin out to be some kind of Robin Hood character.

But the real Dick Turpin was born at the Rose and Crown in Hempstead, Essex. He was baptised in the village church of St Andrew's as Richardus Turpin on 21 September 1705 to Maria and John – a farmer, butcher and sometime innkeeper. Little is known of Turpin's early years, save for the fact he was apprenticed to a butcher in Whitechapel sometime in his teens, and by the time he was 21 he had his own shop. Early in his career of crime he would obtain sheep and cattle by 'relieving' the animals from farms in the neighbourhood.

On one occasion, having stolen two bullocks from a farmer by the name of Mr Giles of Plaistow, he drove the pair to his house and slaughtered them. Unbeknown to Turpin, two servants of Mr Giles suspected him as the culprit and managed to trace the animals to his house. The animals' carcasses were seen by the two servants, but of course without the skins they could not be sure. However, they knew that Turpin used to get rid of hides at the nearby town of Waltham Abbey, and it was there that they discovered them. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Turpin, but as the law officers were entering his house, he escaped through a back window and fled.

Defining moment

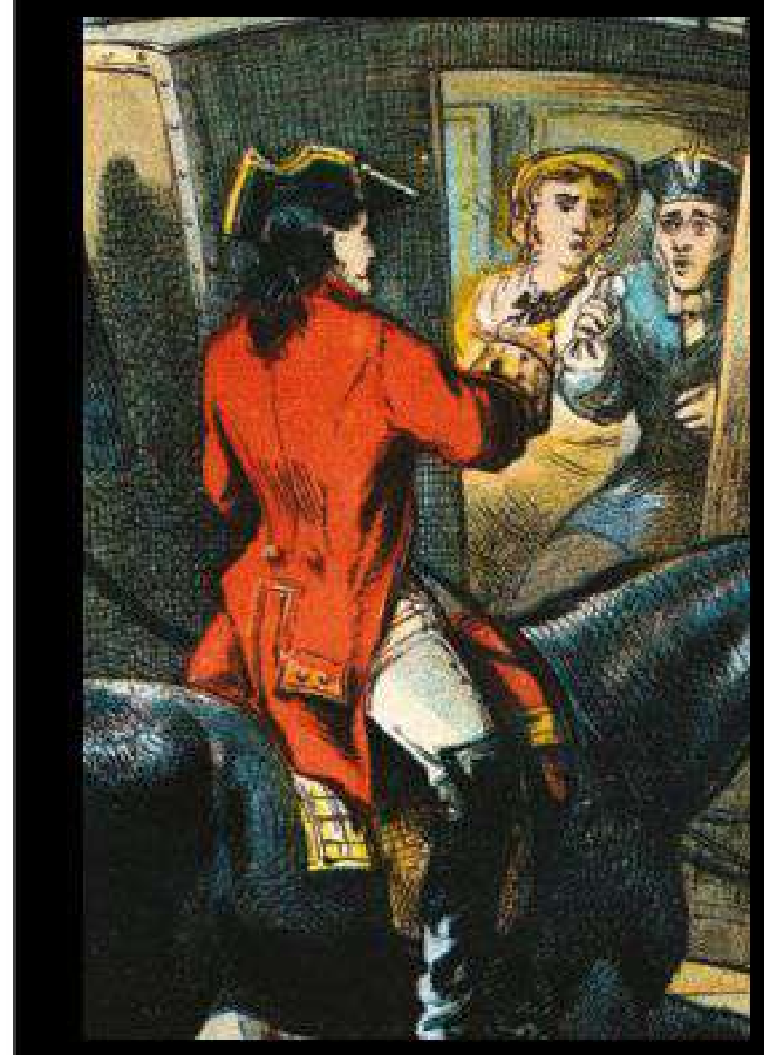
Turpin's cover is blown

The handwriting in a letter written by Turpin was recognised by a former teacher leading to his capture and eventual execution.

February 1739

Image courtesy of The York Dungeon

Allies



Tom King
Nicknamed the 'Gentleman Highwayman', King's first encounter with Turpin happened when Turpin tried to rob him. When his attempts failed, the two joined forces as a crime duo, and it was because of King's influence that Turpin turned away from petty crime and began his career as a highwayman.

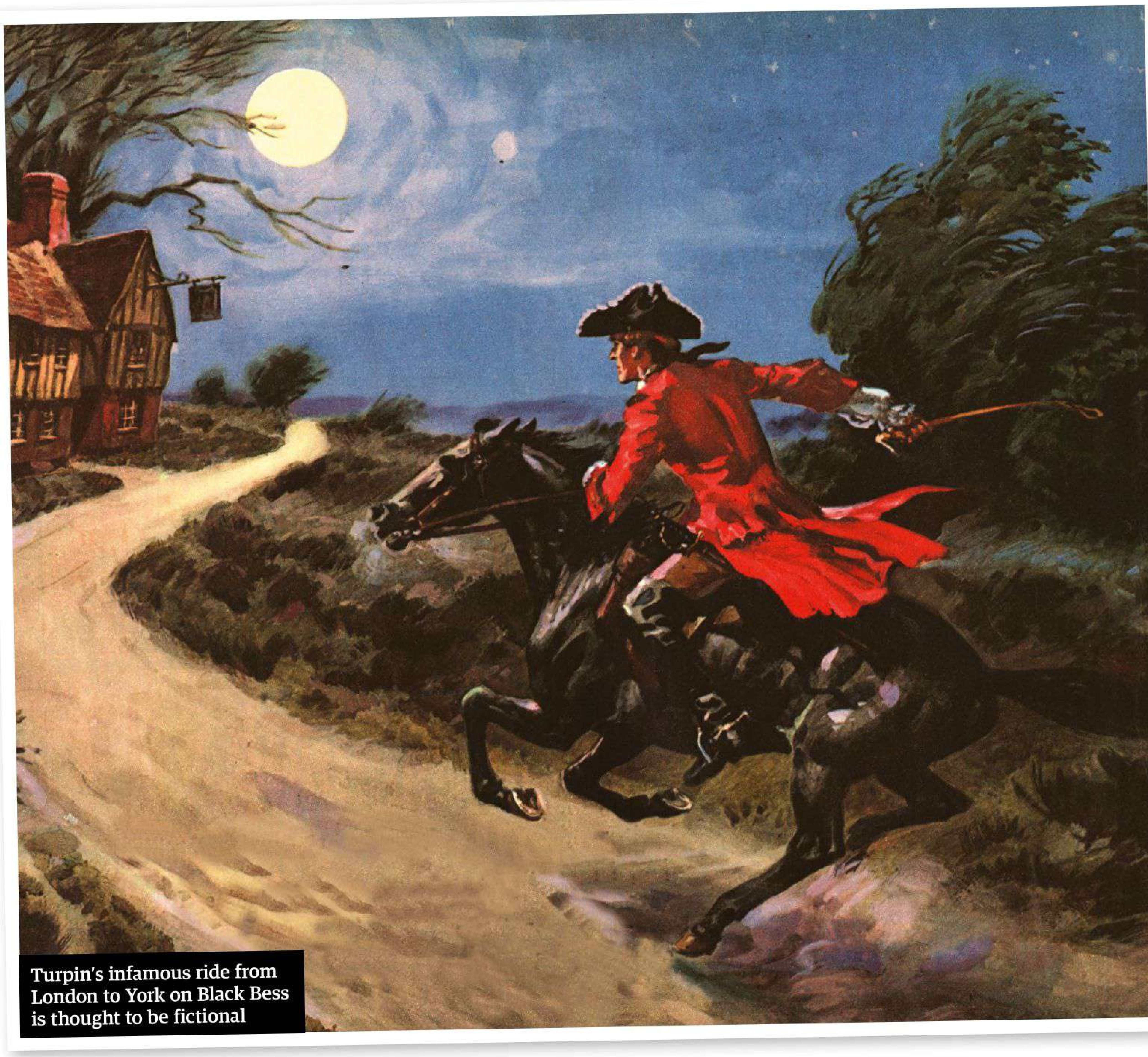
Samuel Gregory
A blacksmith by trade, Gregory was also leader of a gang of deer-stealers, known as the Essex gang. They were renowned for their deadly raids on farmhouses and poaching deer in the Forest of Waltham. The gang needed a way to dispose of the deer, and Turpin, then a young butcher, was the perfect candidate.

Evading the law for the first time, Turpin's life began to change. He went from supplementing his business by stealing livestock to making a living as a career criminal. He spent a short time as a smuggler, curtailed by the intervention of customs officers. He then joined up with the Essex Gang - notorious deer stealers in Epping Forest. His crimes within the gang and alone were vast.

But this was not enough for the ambitious Turpin, who had quickly become leader of the Essex gang, and soon the group turned to housebreaking. They first attacked the house of Mr Strype, an elderly shopkeeper in Watford, stealing all his cash but leaving him unharmed.

Then, on 11 January 1735, Turpin and five gang members forced their way into the house of a man named Saunders; they found the family playing cards. They broke open a desk and chests and grabbed £100 and a quantity of plates. Not content with their haul, they ransacked the larder and the wine cellar. After helping themselves to dinner and drinks, they left and went to an inn in Woolwich to carry on celebrating. Later that night they broke into an empty house and stashed the loot.

In the following weeks, Turpin gathered information about an elderly woman living in Loughton who had significant savings in her home. On 1 February 1735, Turpin and his cronies broke into the house of 'the old widow Shelley'. Confronting her, the gang demanded to know the whereabouts of her horde, but she refused to tell them. Turpin, outraged, was recorded to have said: "God damn your blood, you old bitch, if you won't tell me I'll set your arse on the grate!" After she refused to answer, according to *The Newgate Calendar*, he did exactly that. For the next few weeks Turpin had a number of narrow escapes, but continued his robberies, and at some point took up with Matthew 'Tom' King, another notorious highwayman. This partnership ended, however, when Turpin accidentally shot King while they were trying to escape from the authorities.



Turpin's infamous ride from London to York on Black Bess is thought to be fictional

After much criminal activity, on his own and with his gang, on 4 May 1737 Turpin committed the crime that would bring him to the gallows. The keeper of Epping Forest had received information that Turpin might be hiding in a cave there. The reward was £900 for his capture. The keeper sent Thomas Morris, one of his servants, accompanied by a higgler (travelling produce buyer) to apprehend him. They came across Turpin, who, thinking they were poachers, said: "There are no hares in this thicket," in the hope they might go on their way. "No," replied Morris, "but I have a Turpin." With that he demanded Turpin surrender, but the crook was quick on his feet, and backed into the cave to get his carbine. Morris was taken off his guard and paid with his life as Turpin shot him. The higgler ran, fearing he would be next.

A few days later, posters appeared offering an award of £200 to anyone who could provide information on Turpin's whereabouts.

Now living under the alias John Palmer, Turpin was eventually captured more than a year later, at the Green Man Inn in Welton, East Yorkshire, and then lodged in the Beverley House of Correction until he was transferred to York Castle.

It was in York Castle jail that Turpin made the fatal mistake of writing to his brother-in-law. In the letter, dated 6 February 1739, Turpin asked that his brother provide a character reference, signing the letter 'John Palmer'. Unfortunately for Turpin, the letter was returned unopened as his brother refused to pay the postage, not knowing anyone living in York. The letter found its way to Saffron Walden, where James Smith, a former teacher of Turpin's, saw the letter in the post office, recognised the handwriting and immediately informed Thomas Stubbing, justice of the peace. Stubbing opened the letter and Smith's testimony confirmed that John Palmer and Dick Turpin were one and the same person. Turpin had used part of his mother's maiden name of Parmenter in an attempt to deceive the authorities. This was the end of the road for Turpin; his fate was sealed.

Defining moment

Turpin executed

Dick Turpin was found guilty on two charges of stealing a horse on 22 March 1739. Just a couple of weeks later he was executed by hanging.

7 April 1739

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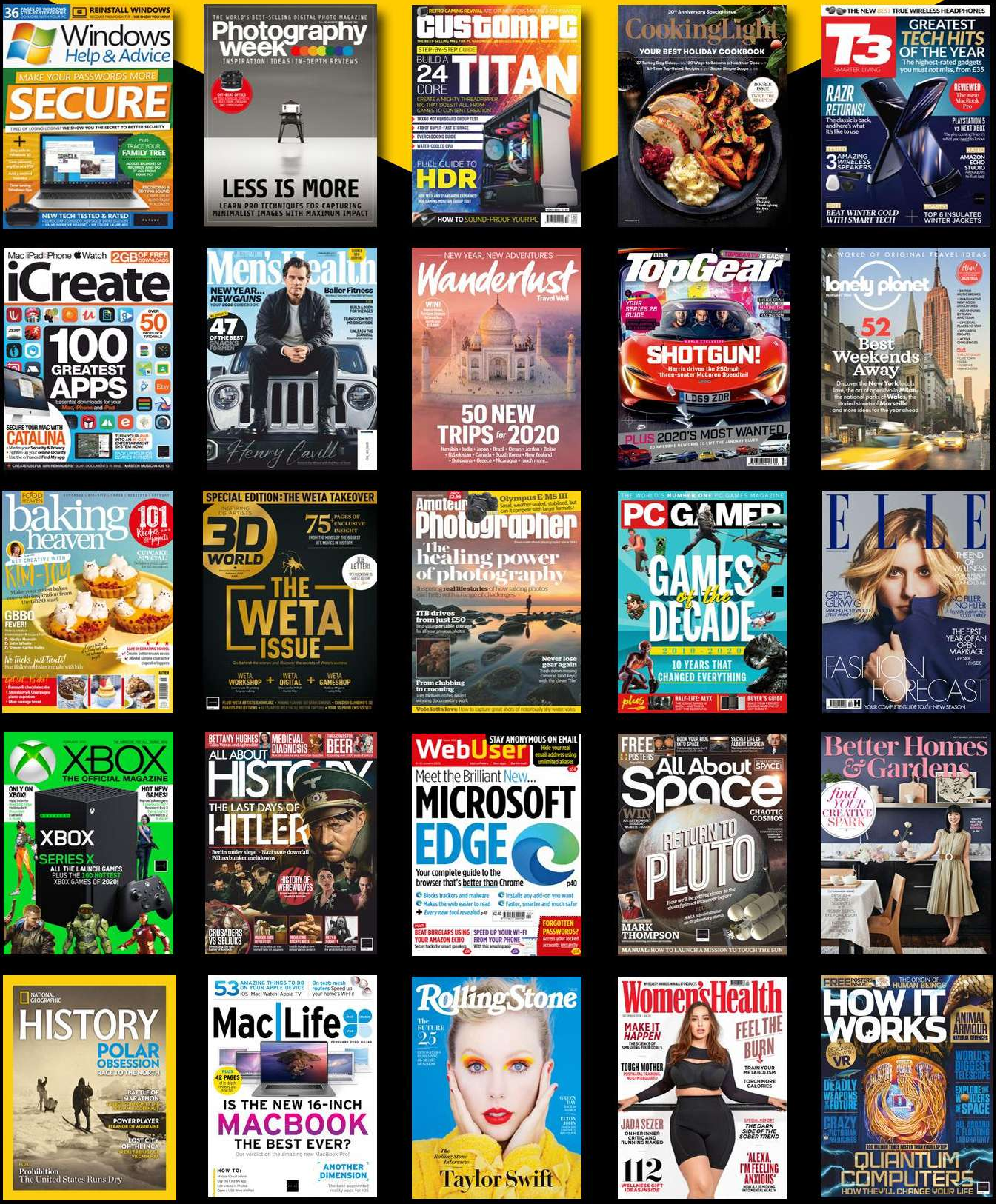
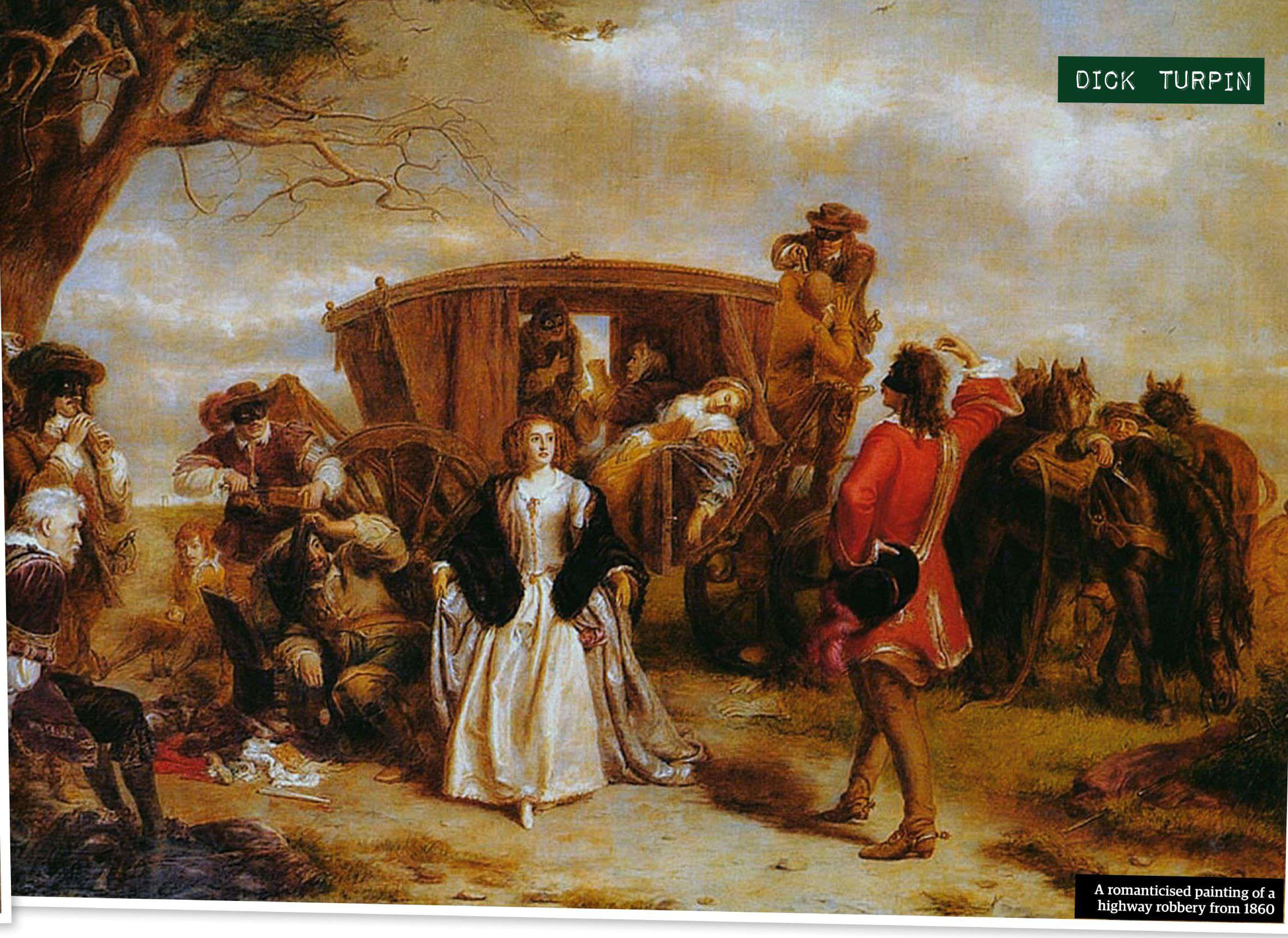




A romanticised painting of a highway robbery from 1860

> “Due to his notoriety and character, it came as no surprise when nobody spoke up in Turpin’s defence during his trial”

James Smith was sent to York to positively identify Turpin. Word quickly spread that the infamous Dick Turpin was a prisoner in York Castle and people from all over the country flocked to the prison to try to grasp at least a glimpse of the notorious highwayman.

Turpin was convicted on two indictments of horse theft, but not murder. Stealing horses had been a capital offence since 1545 and he was sentenced to death by the judge. After his conviction, he wrote to his father in order to try to illicit the help of a “gentleman and lady of rank to make interest that his sentence might be remitted; and that he might be transported.”

Due to his notoriety and character, it came as no surprise when nobody spoke up in Turpin’s defence. He had protested throughout his trial that he had not been given enough time to form his defence and asked that proceedings should be delayed until he could call his witnesses. This had been refused and the judge asked Turpin if there was any reason why he should not be given the death sentence. Turpin replied: “It is very hard upon me, my lord, because I was not prepared for my defence.” The judge replied: “Why was you not? You knew the time of the assizes as well as any person here.” Turpin also claimed that he had been told that the trial would be held in Essex and the judge again came back with: “Whoever told you so were highly to blame; and as your country have found you guilty of a crime worthy of death, it is my office to pronounce sentence against you.”

Many people visited Turpin in his cell while he was awaiting his sentence and the York Castle jailer was said to have earned about £100 by selling drinks to his visitors.

Finally, the day came for Turpin to be taken to Knavesmire in York to meet his maker. Due to not having a full-time hangman, it was usual that a pardoned felon be used as executioner. This job was given to a Thomas Hadfield and in an account in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* from 7 April 1739: “Turpin behaved in an undaunted manner; as he mounted the ladder, feeling his right leg tremble, he spoke a few words to the topsman, then threw himself off, and expir’d in five minutes.”

In those times, what was called the ‘short drop’ method of hanging strangled the victim to death, and slowly too. Turpin was left there till later in the day and eventually cut down and removed to a tavern in Castlegate in York.

The following morning, Turpin’s corpse was transferred to the graveyard of St George’s Church in Fishergate. The following Tuesday, his corpse was snatched from his grave, but was later recovered and reburied, this time in quicklime.

Turpin’s grave can still be seen, however, there is speculation he was not buried there at all. We will probably never know, but the legend of Dick Turpin lives on as England’s most infamous highwayman.

© Look and Learn; Mary Evans

Dick Turpin became the subject of legend after his execution, romanticised as dashing and heroic

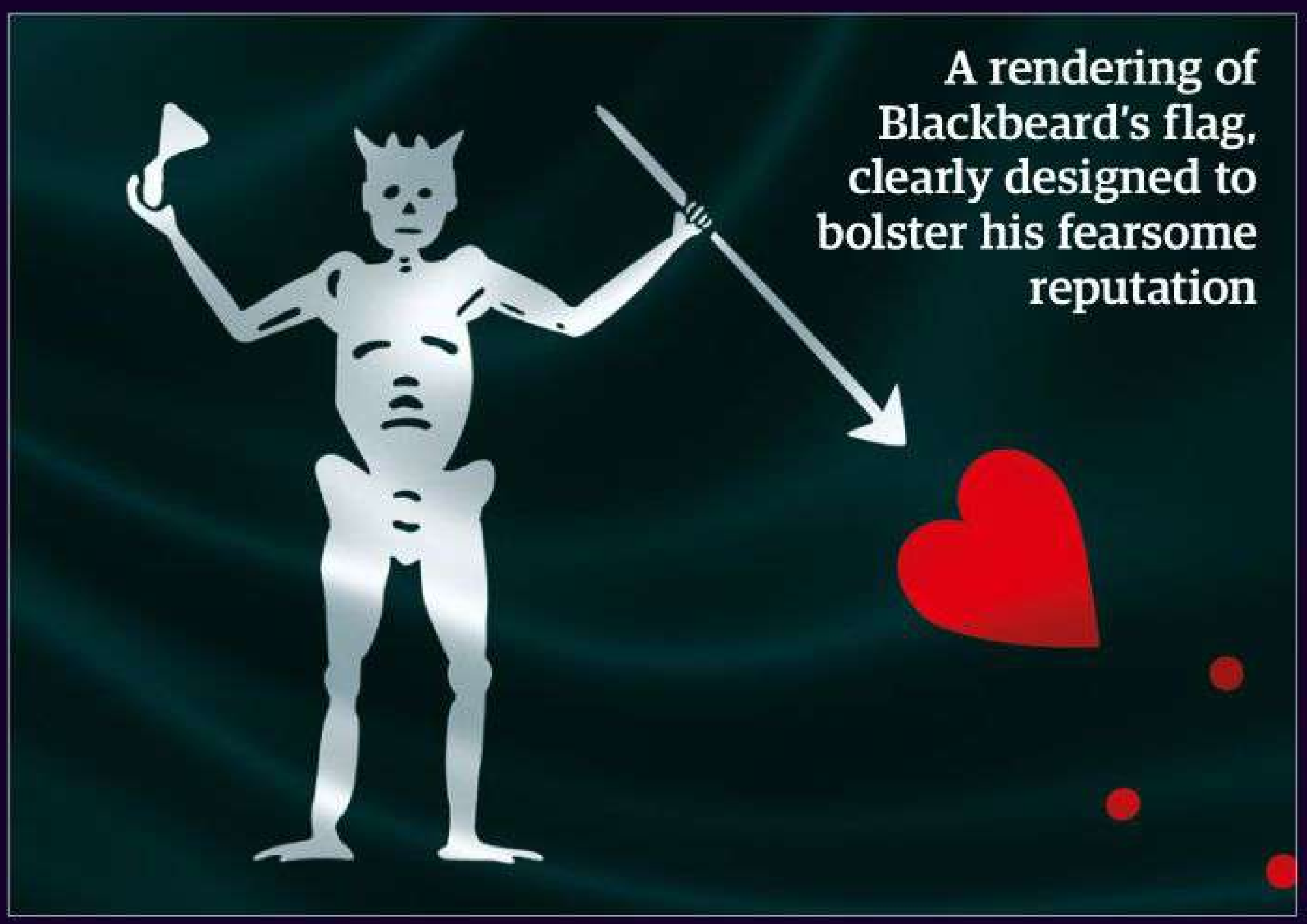
Blackbeard: King of the Pirates

One of the most feared and reviled pirates on the high seas, Blackbeard was renowned for his bloodthirsty reputation

Blackbeard was outnumbered, and massively so. His reckless nature had taken over, and it had sent him leaping into the jaws of death. He had boarded a rival sloop with a handful of his loyal men, but now he could see none of them past the surrounding enemies. The deck on which he stood was slick with blood, some of it his rivals', and some of it his own. He had already been hacked, slashed and shot, but still he was standing. He was a terrifying vision on the deck, his wounds bleeding out and the smoke of gunpowder all about him as he gasped for breath. The men were hesitant, but confident in their numbers. They finally had him, trapped like a wild animal, the figure of legend and terror of the seas – not a demon, but a real man who could bleed and die.

The name Blackbeard holds great power, even today. The most feared and reviled pirate of his time, to us he is a figure obscured by myth and legend. To find out information about his early life is like chasing a shadow, a dark, long cloaked figure glimpsed in a gloomy alley, who vanishes through the fog. We are not even completely sure what his true name was. Most sources claim it was some variation of Edward Teach or Edward Thatch, while another claims it was Drummond, but none of these are verified, and are never likely to be confirmed. There's plenty that could be true of the mysterious figure: he might have been born in Bristol, perhaps he was wealthy; both educated guesses based on what we know of the era. How can one man hide so well from history? How can a man, with a name so well known, hide from his past even today? The reason is simple: this was Blackbeard's plan all along. Like many pirates, he did not wish to darken his family name, but even more so, what he desired was to create a fearsome image of himself. A backstory can serve to humanise a person, steeping them in reality, but he didn't wish to be part of reality at all, instead painting himself as a figure of legend, of horror and of the unknown.

Blackbeard appears, seemingly out of nowhere around 1717, after likely serving as a privateer during Queen Anne's War. At this point, he moved to New Providence in the Bahamas, and there joined the crew of a certain Captain Benjamin Hornigold, a privateer-turned-pirate who had made an infamous name for himself. Hornigold, not an easy man to impress, must have seen some potential in Blackbeard as he put him in charge of a sloop he had captured. Now with Blackbeard in command of his own vessel and small crew, the two men set out pillaging and plundering many ships they encountered, their fearsome reputation was formed in this short period. However, Hornigold was a man of morals, he wished to only attack enemy ships, and was against plundering British-flag vessels, despite the valuable booty they carried. His crew found this frustrating and after a vote, he was demoted from Captain. As second-in-command, this left Blackbeard in charge of one of the most feared forces of the seas. He, unlike Hornigold, had no objections to looting any ships, even those of his own countrymen. Hornigold soon retired, though would later begin a career as a pirate hunter, and Blackbeard found himself in charge of two powerful ships, a loyal crew, and with an insatiable appetite for riches and adventure.

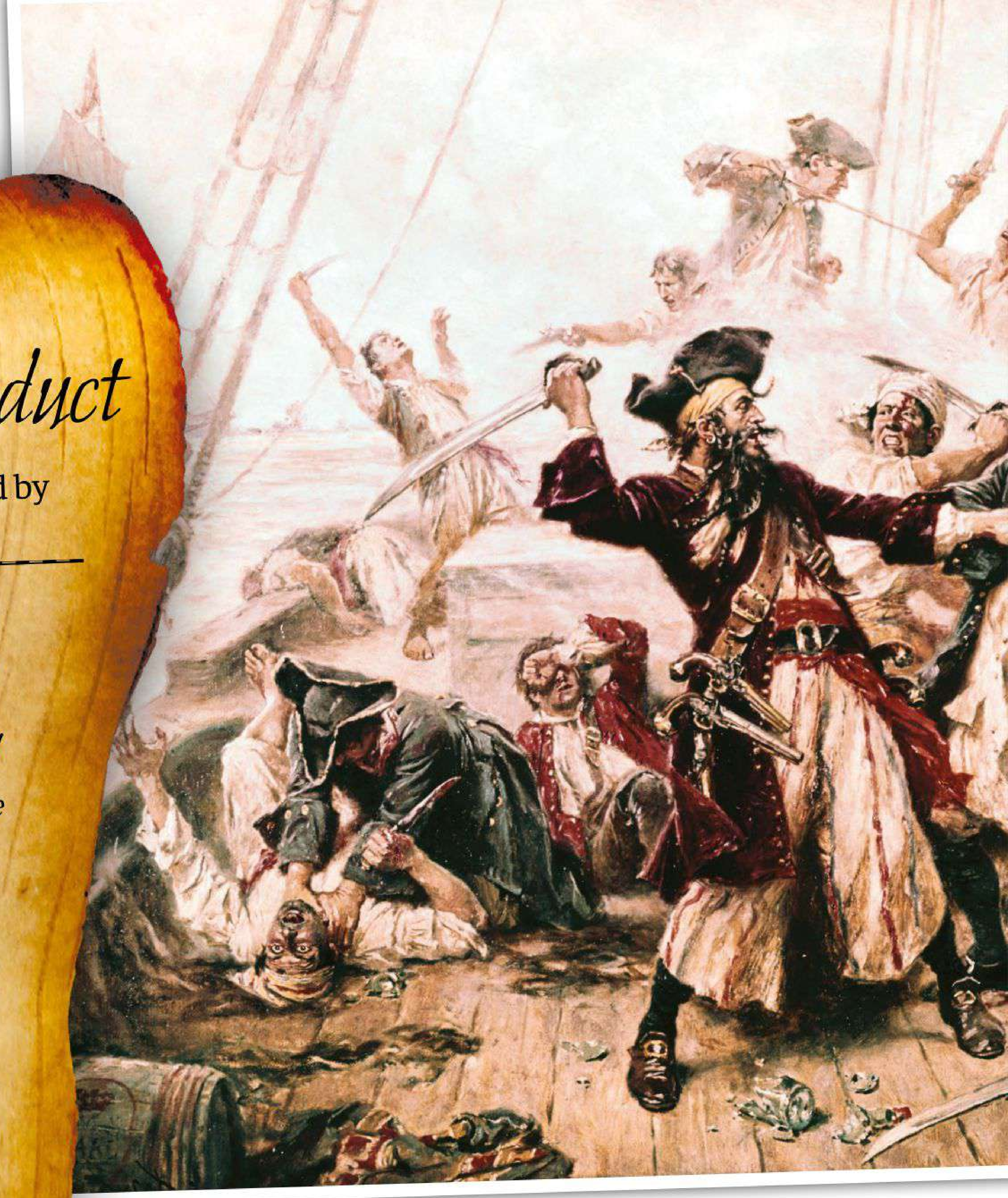


A rendering of Blackbeard's flag, clearly designed to bolster his fearsome reputation

The Pirate Code of Conduct

Some of the most absurd and unexpected rules crews lived by

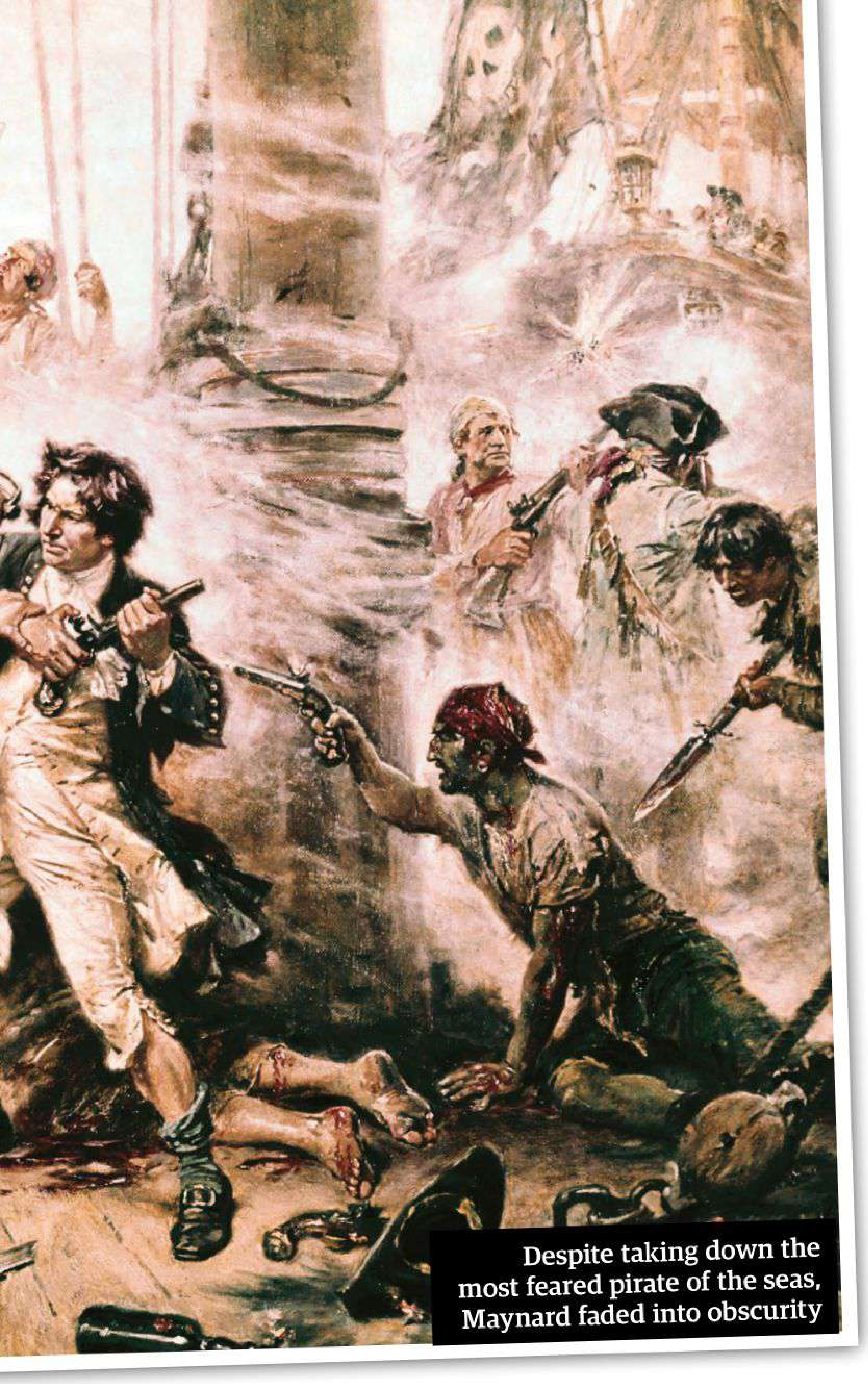
- *Every man will be given his fair share of the booty. However, if they steal from the company they will be marooned. If they steal from another pirate their ears and nose will be cut, then they will be set ashore in a place where he is sure to encounter hardships.*
- *No gambling on board, this includes playing cards or dice for money.*
- *All lights out by 8pm, if anyone wants to drink after this time, they must do so on the open deck without a light.*
- *No child or woman allowed on board. If any man smuggles a woman on board he will be put to death.*
- *No fighting on board. Quarrels will be ended on shore. The men will face back to back, pace a set distance, turn and fire, he who draws first blood wins.*
- *Any man who runs away or keeps a secret from the company will be marooned with a bottle of gunpowder, a bottle of water, a gun and one bullet.*
- *Any man that tries to rape a woman will be killed.*
- *The first man to see a vessel will be given the best pistol aboard.*
- *Every man shall have an equal vote in affairs. He shall also have an equal share of the provisions.*
- *If you lose a limb or become a cripple you will be given 800 pieces of eight from the common stock. The same applies to lesser injuries where you will receive less.*
- *The musicians are allowed the Sabbath day off as rest.*



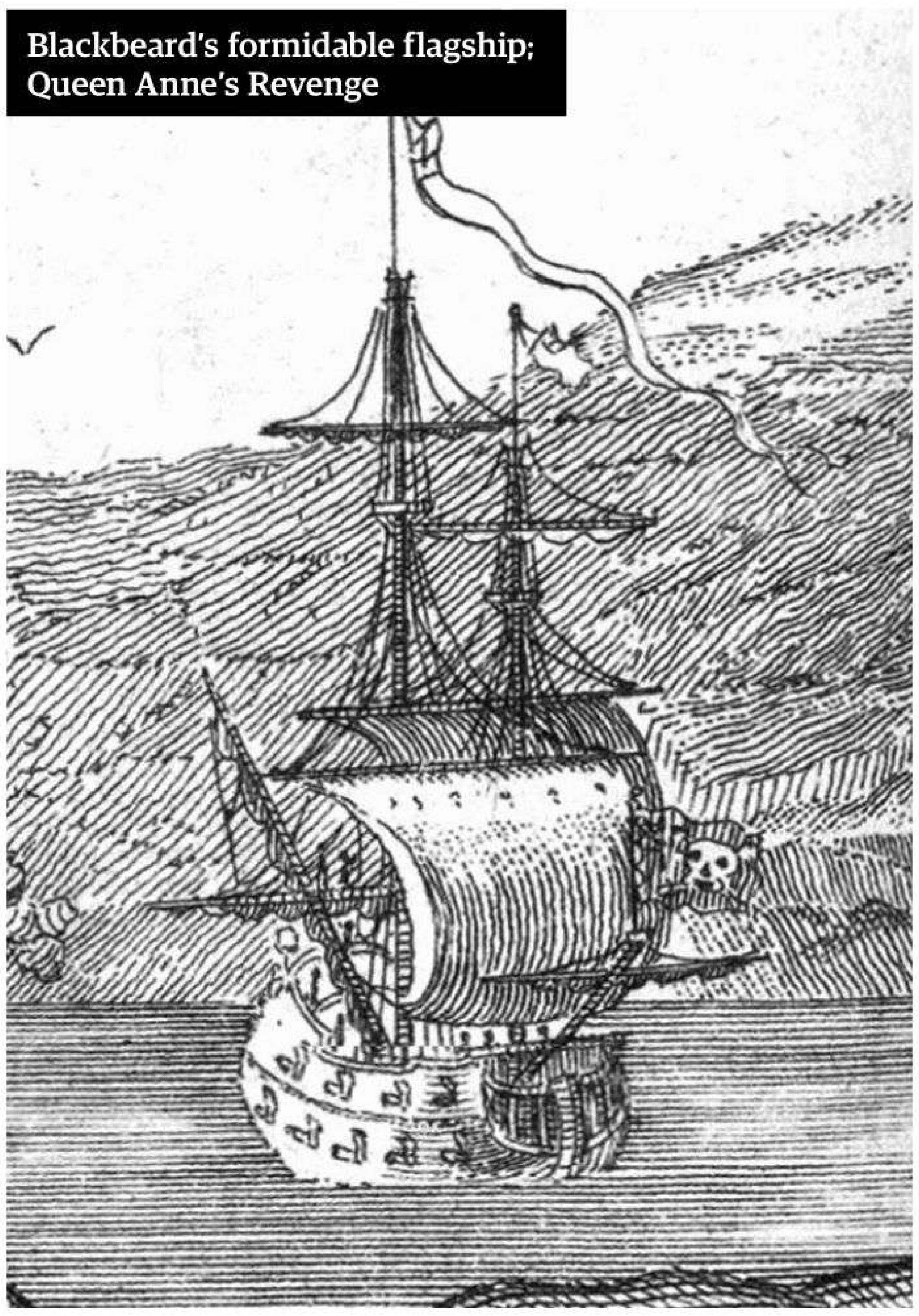
Later that year, Blackbeard and his crew sailed the Eastern Caribbean and encountered a slave ship know as La Concorde. This huge French vessel would make a fine prize and, after Blackbeard fired two broadsides into it, the ship and crew surrendered. Blackbeard quickly made the vessel his flagship and fitted it out with 40 guns. He named it Queen Anne's Revenge, perhaps in reference to the war he had most likely fought in (although, as with many of Blackbeard's decisions, we cannot be certain of the true reasoning). One thing was for sure, though: he understood the importance of size and power on the ocean. The 40 guns were not necessarily for the purpose of devastating enemy ships, for he wouldn't wish to sink them, but instead, to present a formidable, unbeatable sight to deter any rivals that dare contemplate facing him.

Blackbeard understood the incredible power of image very well, and he extended this not only to his ship, but to himself, too. He desired to strike fear into the heart of his enemies before even raising a weapon. As a naturally tall, broad man, he used this to his advantage, dressing himself in knee-high boots, dark clothing and a flaming red coat. To make himself even more imposing, he wore a wide hat. His famous thick black beard was long and braided with ribbons. He was later described as "such a figure that imagination cannot form an idea of a fury from Hell to look more frightful." It must have been terrifying for those sailors, hearing tales of such a beast, to see his standard flying on an approaching ship, and the monster himself standing on deck. It is no wonder that on many occasions, ships simply surrendered to him without a fight.

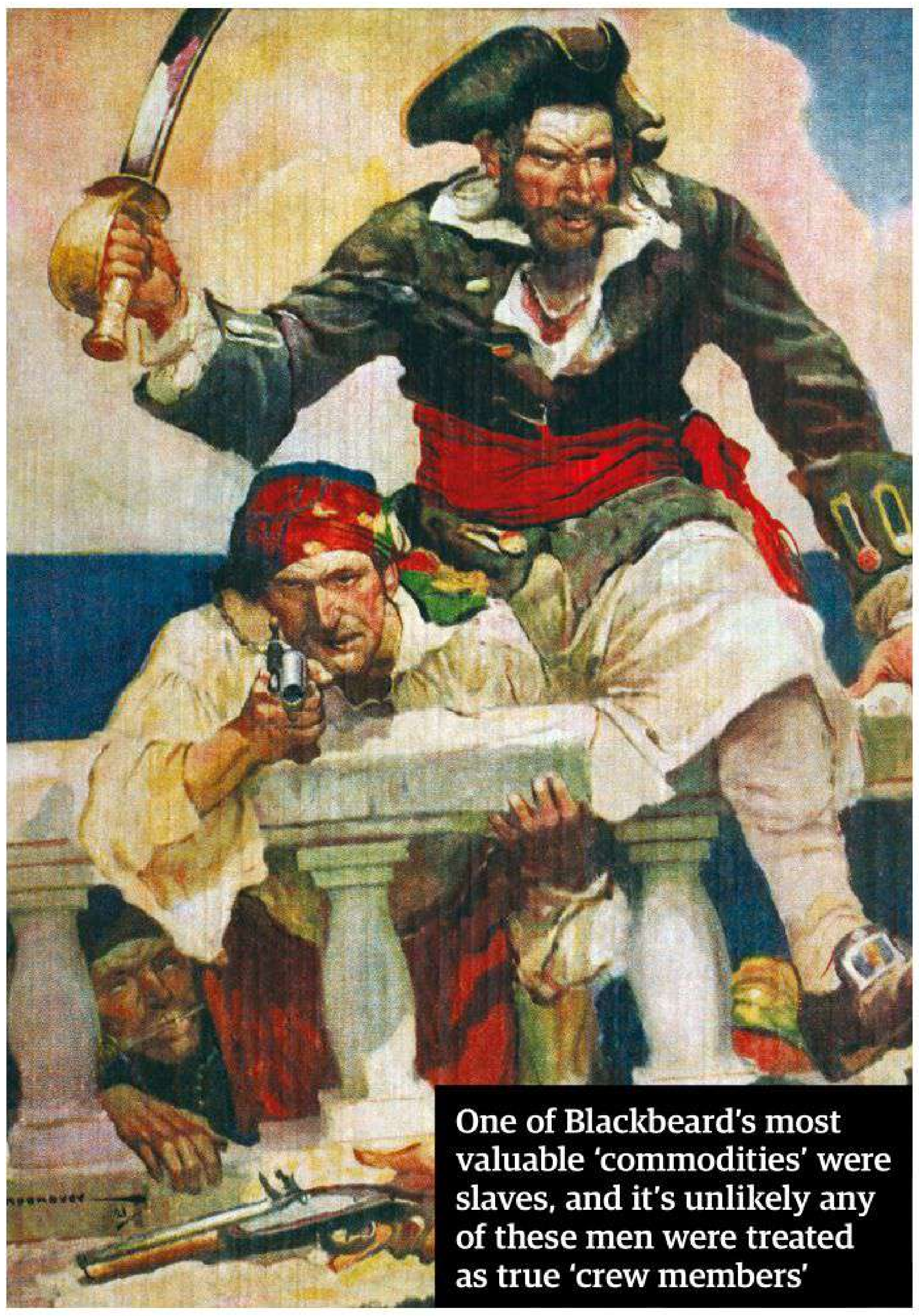
There were, in fact, far more fearsome pirates than Blackbeard, and some of these were vicious



Despite taking down the most feared pirate of the seas, Maynard faded into obscurity



Blackbeard's formidable flagship; Queen Anne's Revenge



One of Blackbeard's most valuable 'commodities' were slaves, and it's unlikely any of these men were treated as true 'crew members'

men who killed without mercy and committed horrific atrocities to the men they captured. Blackbeard never murdered or harmed anyone he held captive. All things considered, he was actually a more reasonable man than most of his rivals, but his fearsome appearance and reputation preceded him, and that was just how he liked it. Blackbeard's actions actually prove how clever and cunning he could be. While sailing with Hornigold, Blackbeard met Stede Bonnet. This wealthy landowner spontaneously decided to become a pirate and had purchased his own ship to embark on adventures. Blackbeard quickly realised how unsatisfied his 70-man crew was with his weak command so, simply by asking nicely, he took control of his ship and crew. Bonnet, meanwhile, was kept along as a sort of upper-class traveller. Blackbeard understood the power the combined force would offer, and also the advantage of having a wealthy, naïve gentleman as a 'friend.'

It was a most unlikely partnership but it worked, and Blackbeard with Bonnet in tow cruised the Caribbean, plundering and claiming whatever booty they could find, growing their fleet rapidly. Blackbeard looted his way from St Vincent to St Lucia, Nevis to Antigua and eventually ended up in Puerto Rico. Few ships dared to put up a fight or say no, due to the size of Blackbeard's fleet and his grisly reputation. In 1718 the pirates had reached the Turneffe Islands in the Bay of Honduras, where they spotted the Jamaican sloop Adventure. The captain, David Herriot was 'invited' to join Blackbeard's fleet and he accepted, likely terrified of doing anything to dismay the intimidating pirates, and another formidable ship was added to the flotilla. The journey of terror and plunder continued as they sailed the Bay of Honduras where Blackbeard added a further four sloops and

A pirate with a heart of gold?

Historian and author Colin Woodard examines the truth behind Blackbeard's bloodthirsty reputation

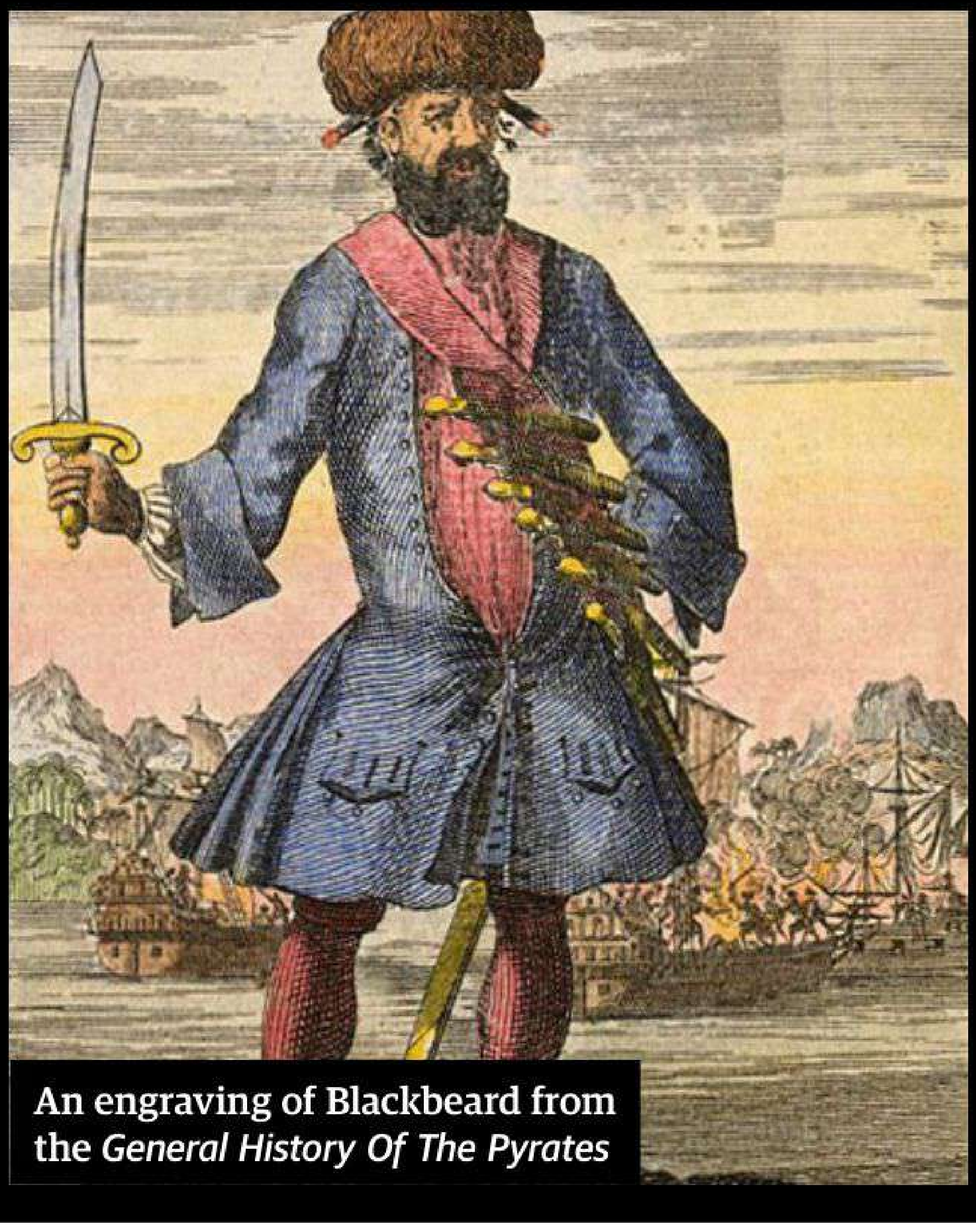
What evidence do we have that Blackbeard wasn't as bad as history makes him out?
Most of what we know about Blackbeard comes from the point of view of his victims, and yet in the entire historical record there is no evidence of him killing anyone prior to his final, fatal battle with the Royal Navy at Ocracoke Island. He did his best to cultivate a terrifying image and reputation, which encouraged his foes to surrender without a fight, reducing the risks to his crew, their potential booty, and the crewmen of the other vessel, who were a potential source of recruits.

How did Blackbeard's actions compare to other pirates of the era?
Many of the pirates of this particular gang – those who operated in the Caribbean and the Thirteen Colonies between 1713 and 1719 – were also judicious in their use of force, particularly when compared to the pirates who came before and later and to the legal authorities. Blackbeard was particularly so, but not unique. There were exceptions, however: violent men like Charles Vane.

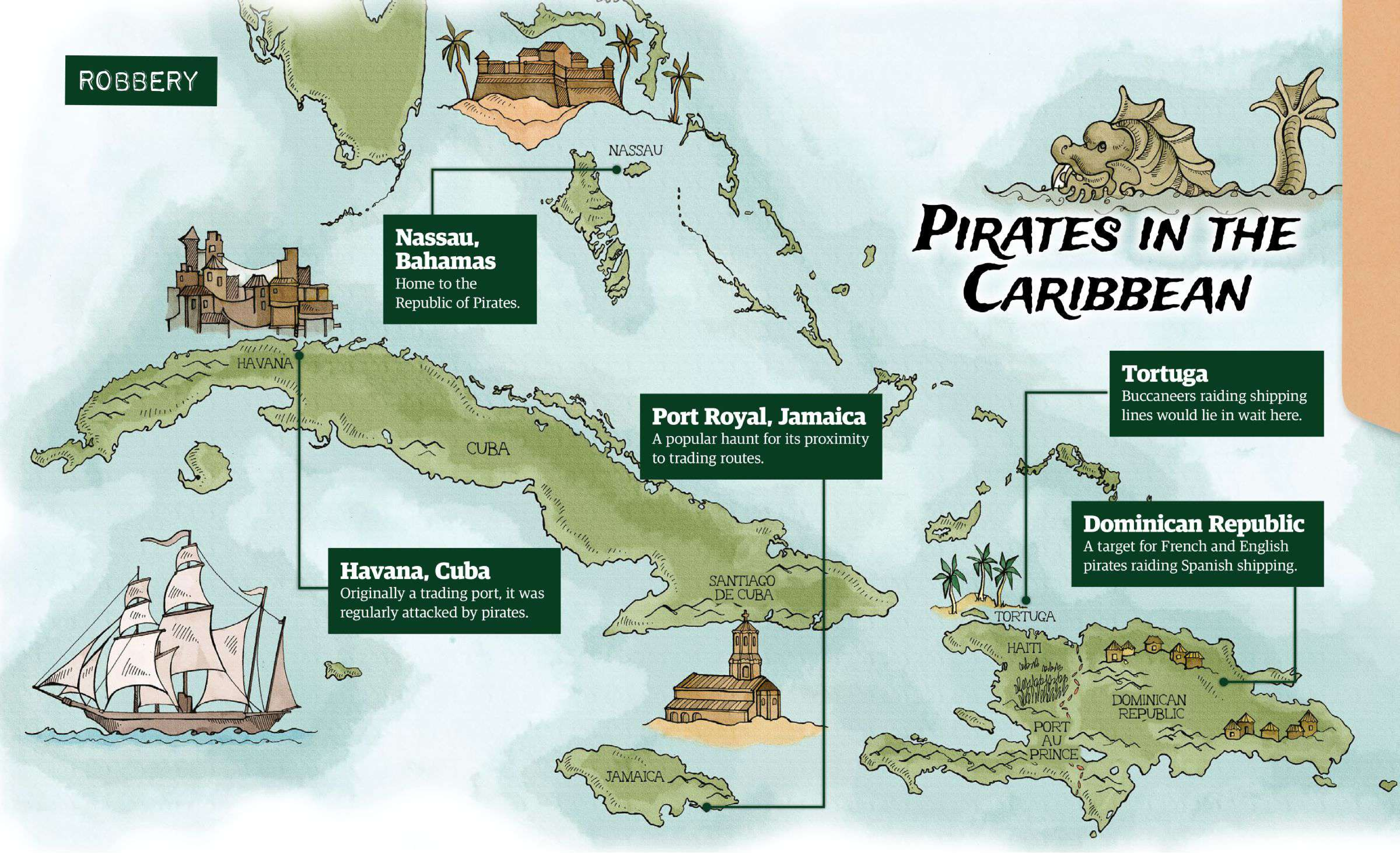
Why do you believe Blackbeard is regarded as the most notorious of all pirates today?
Because he cultivated a fearsome reputation, captured a frigate-sized vessel, and died in a cinematic shipboard sword fight with sailors of the Royal Navy. This captured the attention of the public at the time, including the author of the *General History Of The Pyrates* [now thought to be Captain Charles Johnson], who devoted a sensational chapter of his bestselling 1724 book to Blackbeard, cementing his place in history and pop culture.

Was it Blackbeard who encouraged this reputation, or was it the authorities?
The authorities did their best to demonise the Golden Age pirates, including Blackbeard. Tellingly, members of the non-elite majority of Anglo-American society took the pirates' point of view, which is why the governor of Virginia had to keep his plans to move against the pirates a secret; why the government of South Carolina was nearly overthrown during an insurrection to free the captive pirate Stede Bonnet; and why the *General History* – broadly sympathetic to the pirates – sold so well.

The Republic Of Pirates *by Colin Woodard is out now.*



An engraving of Blackbeard from the *General History Of The Pyrates*



PIRATES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Nassau, Bahamas
Home to the Republic of Pirates.

Havana, Cuba
Originally a trading port, it was regularly attacked by pirates.

Port Royal, Jamaica
A popular haunt for its proximity to trading routes.

Tortuga
Buccaneers raiding shipping lines would lie in wait here.

Dominican Republic
A target for French and English pirates raiding Spanish shipping.

one ship to his fleet. He, at this point, likely felt indestructible. He took advantage of every ship and every opportunity he could, he knew a reputation was a powerful thing and in the space of a year, he had built one that few would manage to craft in a lifetime. This reputation was necessary, for Blackbeard was building up to his most brazen move yet.

In May 1718 the fearsome fleet of Queen Anne's Revenge and three other sloops arrived off the port of Charles Town, South Carolina. This wasn't a sail-by looting, or a quick getaway mission; instead, Blackbeard blockaded the entire port.

> "His head was separated from his body, his corpse thrown into the water"

Blackbeard wasn't the most successful pirate – Henry Every once took more wealth in just a single ship

Blackbeard has appeared as a character in at least six films, and even more television shows and novels

The town had no guard ship and Blackbeard took advantage of this, stopping ships from leaving or entering the port with his huge firepower and towering reputation. Over just six days, nine ships were stopped and ransacked for their valuables.

One of these ships was the Crowley and Blackbeard decided to take all the crew and passengers as prisoners. This seemed a brazen and cruel act, but Blackbeard had requested medicine for his crew. He demanded a chest of it be exchanged for the hostages and threatened that if he was not to receive it in the allotted time, all the prisoners would be killed, their heads sent to the governor and the captured ships burnt. When the government failed to pay up the goods in the allotted time, Blackbeard sailed his ships closer to the city and the citizens flew into a panic. Believing their town was going to be attacked, they began looting and fleeing. Blackbeard hadn't done anything other than move his ships, but his name was so infamous that they truly believed he was capable of horrific deeds. The government quickly paid up and the prisoners were returned. Yet again Blackbeard had won, and he had done it all without spilling a drop of blood.

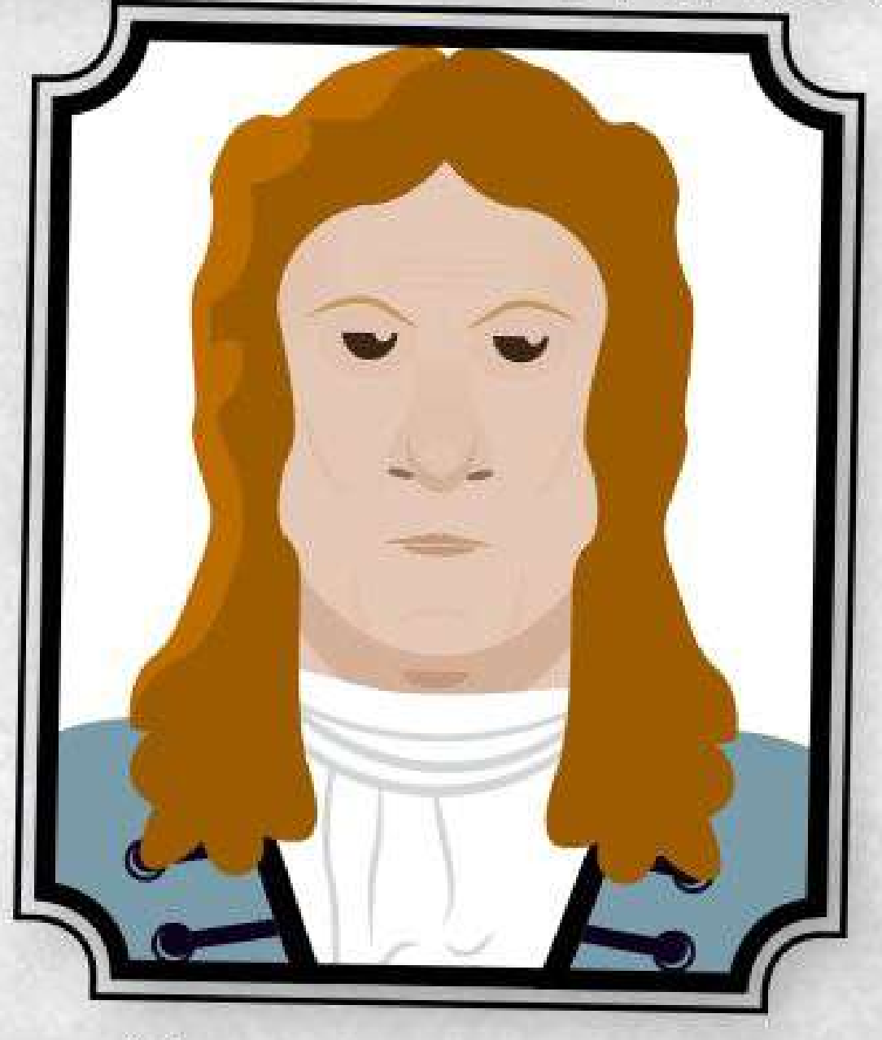
If Blackbeard wasn't already notorious, his bold actions around the harbour of Charles Town did the trick. Blackbeard had the daring and gall to take on the most risky of adventures, and commit acts of piracy that other captains would never dream of. The elaborate show with the hostages, and the massive amount of goods he managed to plunder while near Charles Town filled the newspapers and turned him into a legend.

Soon afterwards, Blackbeard sailed his fleet near the Topsail Inlet in North Carolina. While doing so, Queen Anne's Revenge was grounded and abandoned on a sandbar. This may have been an accident, and it's possible that Blackbeard was only planning to careen his ship to scrape the hulls. But, there is a chance it was intentional. His company was growing to a huge, practically unmanageable size, and he wished to 'shave off the fat' and he had a cunning plan to do so.

The news of a royal pardon travelled quickly. It had been announced that a pardon would be given to all pirates who surrendered before 5

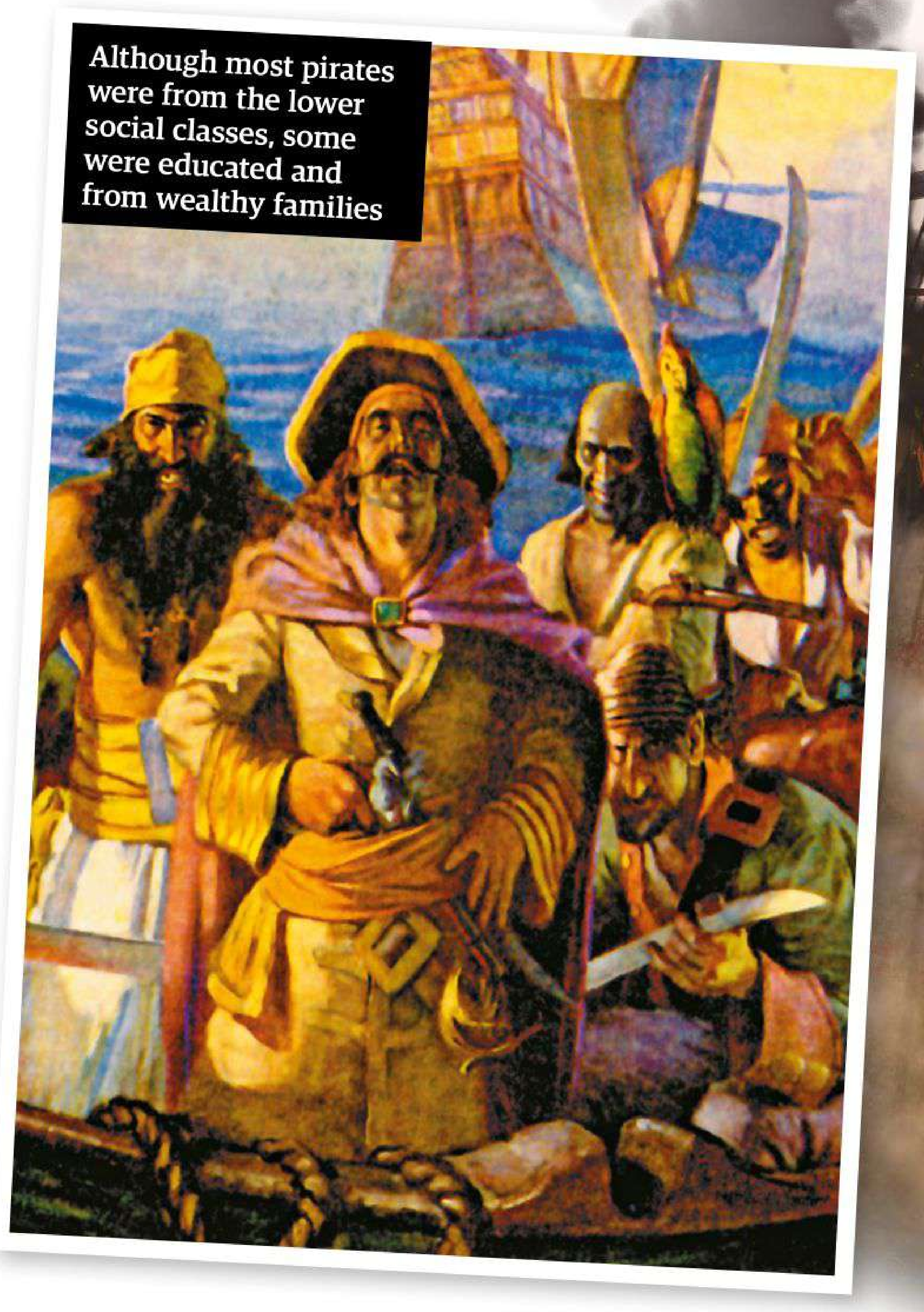
HALL OF INFAMY

How Blackbeard compared to his fellow sea-faring scoundrels

		Estimated wealth	Number of guns on flagship	Crew	Fleet
BLACKBEARD		£10 million	40	300 men	
STEDE BONNET		£3.6 million	10	70 men	
CALICO JACK		£1.2 million	Unknown	75 men	
EDWARD ENGLAND		£6 million	34		2 ships
BLACK SAM		£100 million	28	145 men	
THOMAS TEW		£82 million	8	50 men	
CHARLES VANE		£1.8 million	12		3 ships
BLACK BART		£25 million	52		4 ships

September 1718, but this only applied to crimes committed before 5 January. This would obviously leave Blackbeard at risk due to his actions in Charles Town. He had a trump card however – a gullible comrade who he could send away to obtain the pardon and see what happened. Nudged by Blackbeard, Stede Bonnet obliviously left the company in a sailing boat to try his luck. He obtained his pardon and sailed back to Blackbeard to collect his ship and crew. However, the pirate Captain intended not only to use Bonnet as a trump card, but also as his final scam. He stripped Bonnet's ship, Revenge, of all its valuables and provisions and marooned the crew. Bonnet finally realised what Blackbeard was: not a friend, but a double-crossing snake. Hell-bent on revenge he reclaimed his crew and returned to piracy in a quest to hunt the betrayer. By then, Blackbeard had long disappeared into the fog and Bonnet and his crew were captured and hung for their crimes.

It was no wonder Bonnet couldn't find the notorious pirate who cruelly deceived him. Blackbeard had returned to Bath town, sold all his newly obtained booty, bought a house and obtained a pardon. For all intents and purposes, this was the perfect chance for Teach to finally settle down.

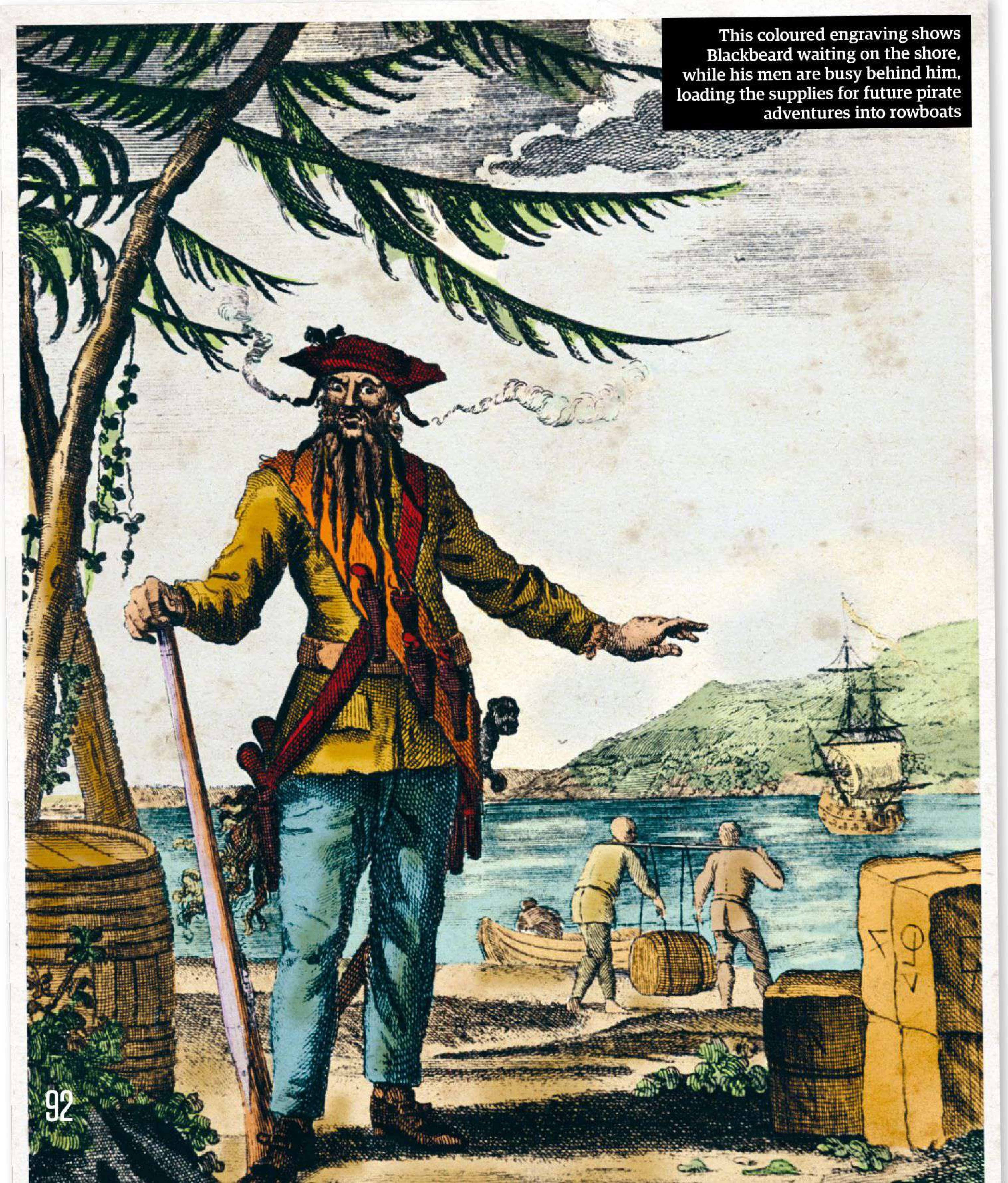


Although most pirates were from the lower social classes, some were educated and from wealthy families

A replica of a Royal Navy frigate, similar to the one captained by Maynard

There are even accounts of him marrying the daughter of a wealthy plantation owner. Blackbeard, however, was not the type to settle down. His various misdemeanours at sea had not been for wealth or a comfortable life, but more for the thrill of adventure and of conquest. Such a rush definitely could not be found settling down for a quiet life on land.

Blackbeard was given permission to become a privateer, but the lure of valuable merchant ships became too much to resist, and he returned to plundering and piracy. He did attempt to be covert about it, for example subduing the crew of two French ships, transferring them all to one and pretending he had 'stumbled' across the 'deserted' ship. For a while the governor believed him, sharing the cargo with Blackbeard. However, suspicions were raised when infamous pirates such as Charles Vane and Calico Jack stopped by his base on Ocracoke Island for impromptu gatherings.



This coloured engraving shows Blackbeard waiting on the shore, while his men are busy behind him, loading the supplies for future pirate adventures into rowboats

> Legend has it that his skull was used to make a silver chalice, with one 1930s judge in Carolina claiming to have drunk from it

News of the pirate parties spread quickly and the governor of Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, became worried about the dangerous crew drawing closer to his land. He issued a proclamation for all former pirates to give themselves up to the authorities, and forbade them from travelling in groups larger than three. Blackbeard declined the offer, and Spotswood decided to take a more direct approach. After obtaining information about Blackbeard's location he sent Lieutenant Robert Maynard with two heavily armed ships and 57 men after the bearded scoundrel.

Just as expected, Maynard found the pirates anchored at Ocracoke Island, so he stopped any ships from entering the inlet and positioned lookouts to prevent Blackbeard escaping. The pirate commander was unaware of Maynard's presence. He was in the midst of hosting a party, and had no more than 25 sailors aboard with him. As soon as morning broke the two sloops moved and Blackbeard spotted them, he cut the anchor, unfurled the sails and fired his guns on the two ships. It was a devastating blow that cost Maynard a huge number of his forces and one of the sloops was so badly damaged that it was out of commission for the rest of the battle.

After a flurry of fires, both remaining ships were grounded and the vessels drew close to each other. Seeing an opportunity, and knowing time was of the essence, Blackbeard ordered his men aboard Maynard's virtually empty ship amid a hail of smoke and gunpowder. As he raced towards Maynard, huddled with a small group at the stern, the hold of the ship opened and a hoard of men burst out. Unbeknown to Blackbeard, they had been hiding there and the surprise attack dealt as much devastation as Maynard intended.

Unprepared for the flurry of men, Blackbeard's pirates desperately fought under their leader's rallying cry, but it was not enough. The pirates were pushed back to the bow and separated from their leader. Alone, surrounded and exposed, Blackbeard fired his flintlock at Maynard who then did the same. They fought cutlass to sword, and the mighty pirate managed to break the Lieutenant's blade. As Maynard hurried to load his gun, Blackbeard leapt forward to cut him down, but before he could do so, one of Maynard's men slashed him across the neck. Staggering and losing blood, the crew leapt on him as one, attacking and finally draining the life out him.

When they examined Blackbeard's body, they reportedly discovered it had been shot five times, and slashed around 20. His head was separated from his body, and his corpse thrown into the water. His head, meanwhile, was hung from the bowsprit of Maynard's sloop. Most of Blackbeard's remaining crew joined their leader in death.

Blackbeard was far from the most successful pirates of his era; many others retired with fabulous

The art of intimidation

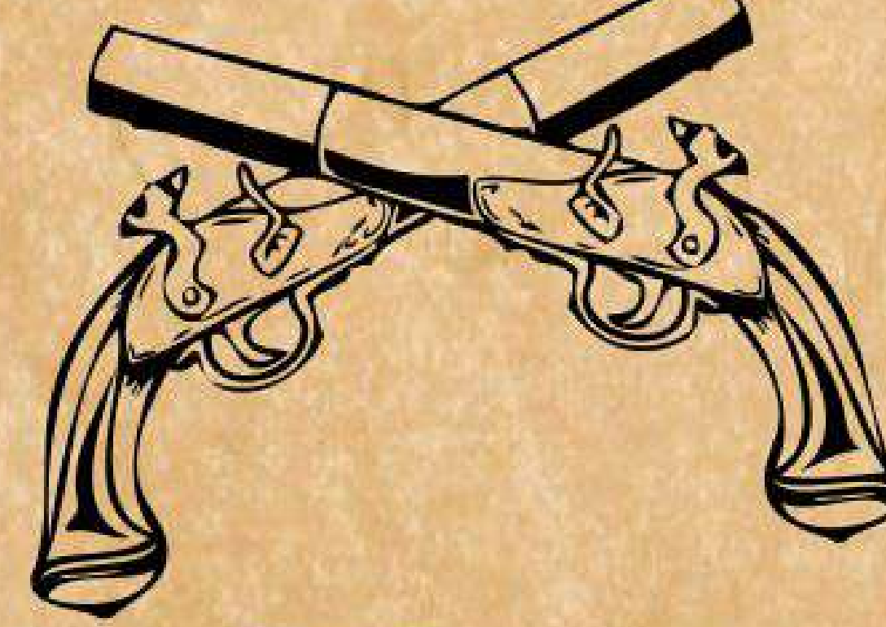
How Blackbeard transformed himself into a demon of the seas

☐ The smoking man

Blackbeard inserted slow burning canon fuses under his hat and lit them as he approached enemies. This would encircle him in smoke, and create a terrifying image.

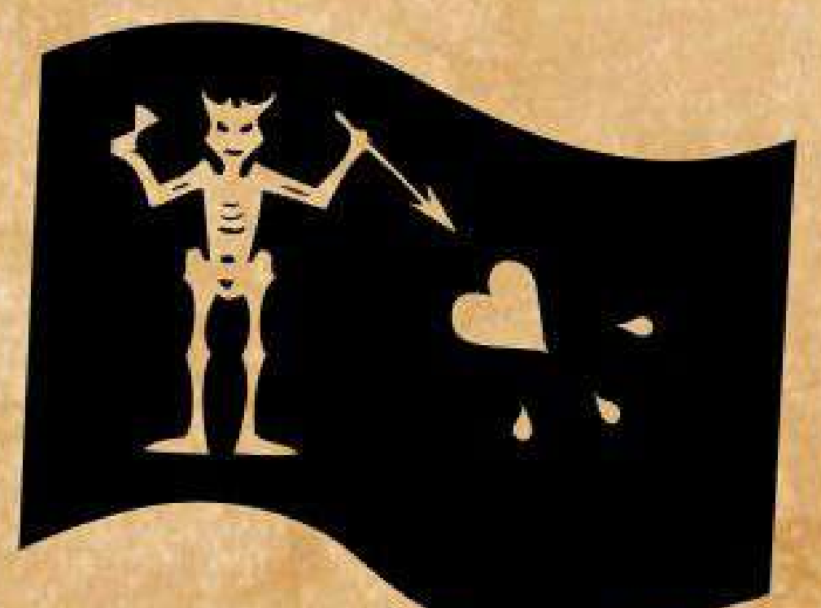
☐ Weaponry

To strike fear into his enemies, Blackbeard wore three pairs of cocked and primed pistols strapped to his chest over a sling. He also carried at least two cutlasses, and sometimes a further four pistols under his belt.



☐ A gruesome flag

The flag was the first thing that approaching ships would look for, and Blackbeard's incorporated all the morbid symbols it could fit. It showed a skeleton with horns, a spear and bleeding heart.

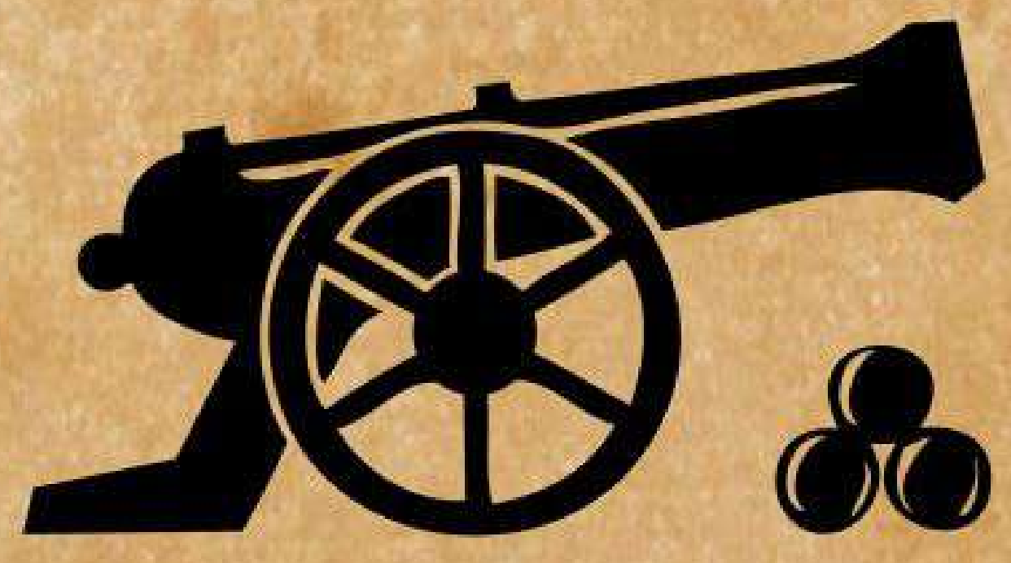


☐ A well-equipped ship

Although he rarely needed to use the weaponry on his flagship, Queen Anne's Revenge, Blackbeard ensured it was equipped to frighten any ship into surrendering; he installed at least 40 cannons to the beastly vessel.

☐ A rude welcome

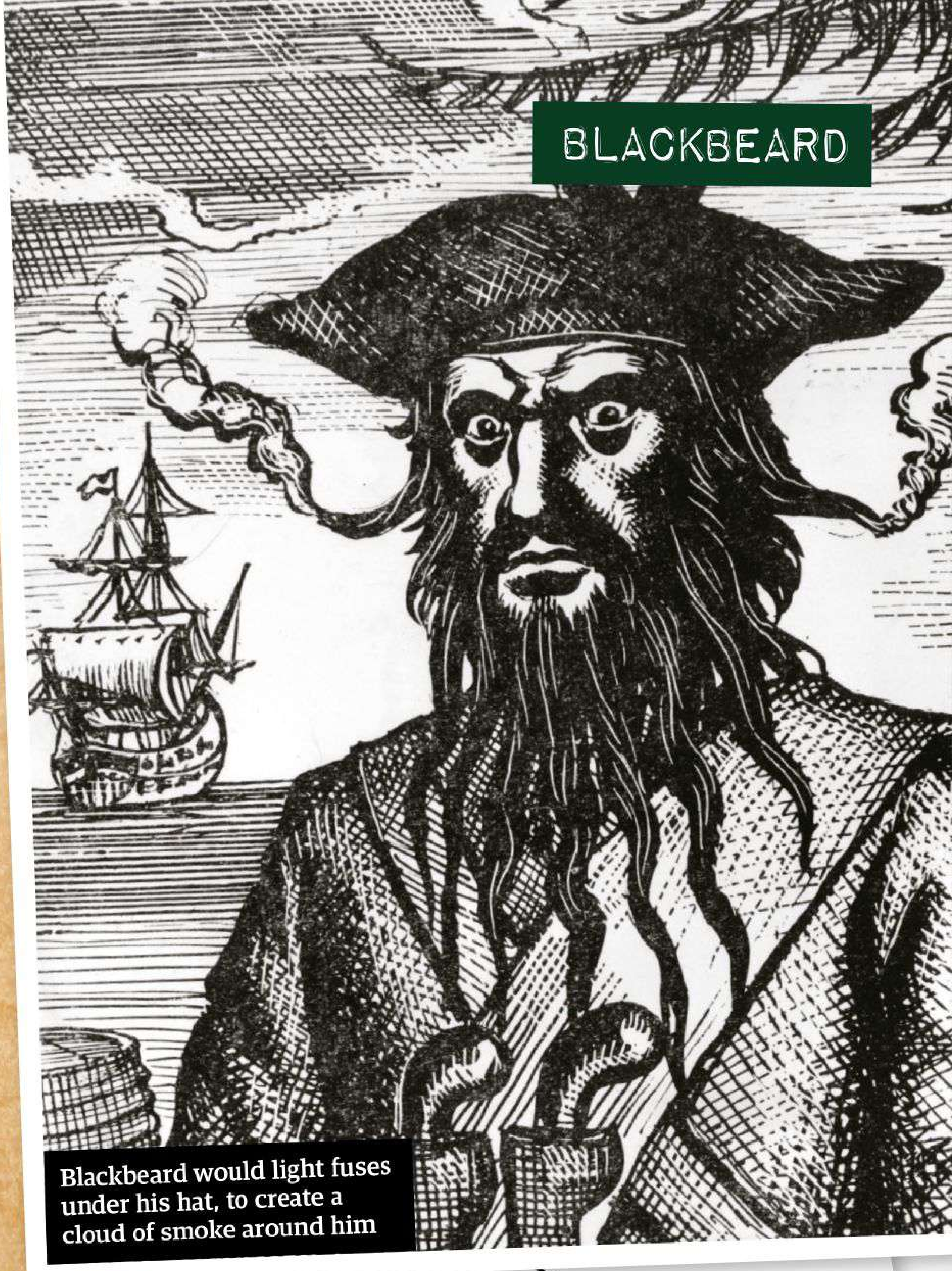
In order to 'persuade' his targets into surrendering, Blackbeard loaded his cannons with shrapnel which would burst open and spray the deck with nails, lead and glass. He also fired two-headed cannonballs that would spin through the air and destroy masts.



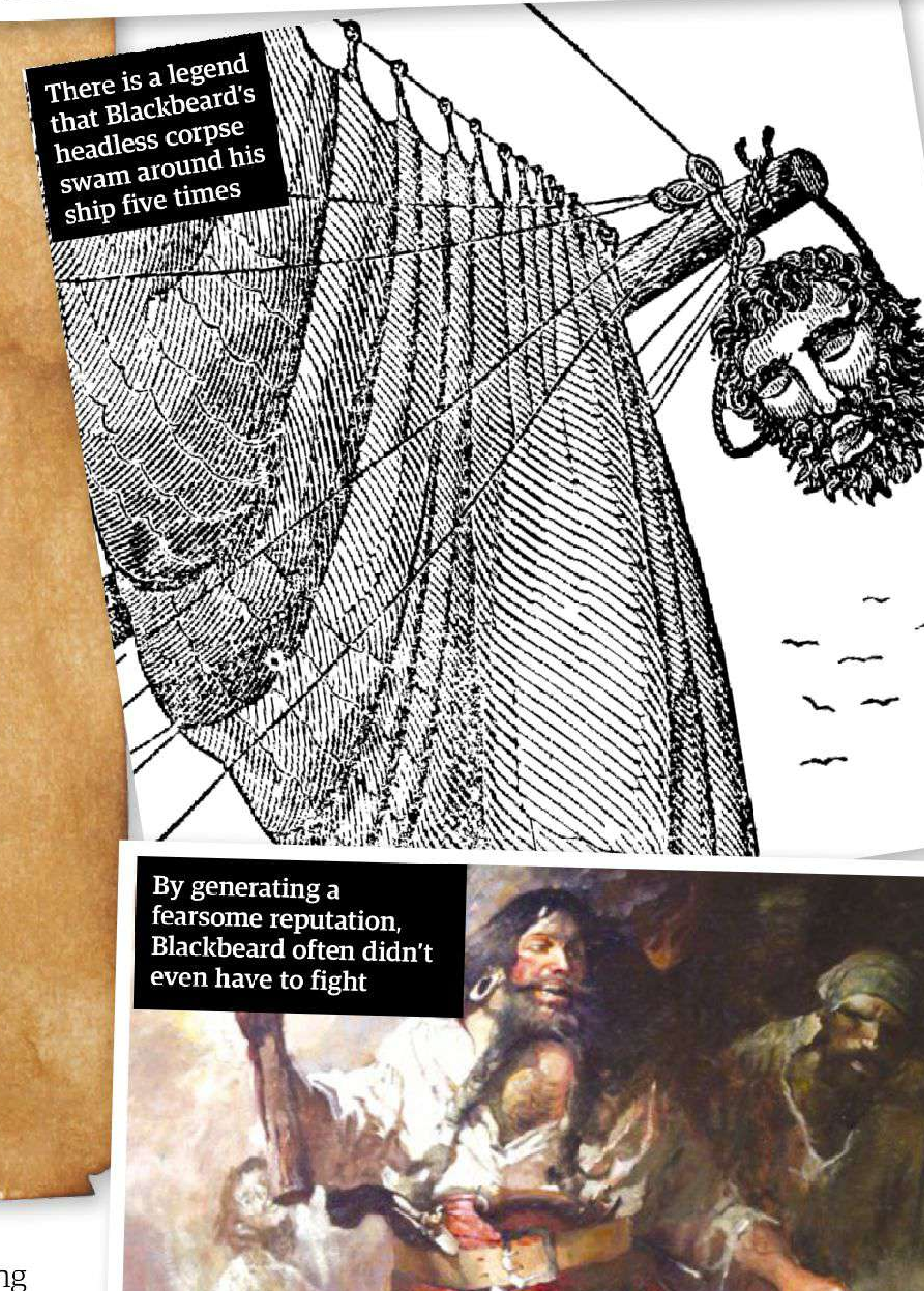
> "Despite his fearsome appearance, there are no verified accounts of Blackbeard ever having murdered or harmed those he held captive"

riches, and there are numerous accounts of men who captured far more ships than he did. He left no hordes of treasure and his piracy 'career' lasted only a couple of years, but despite this he is, arguably, the most famous pirate captain of all time. His story and image have graced the pages of many books and he has featured in countless movies and stories.

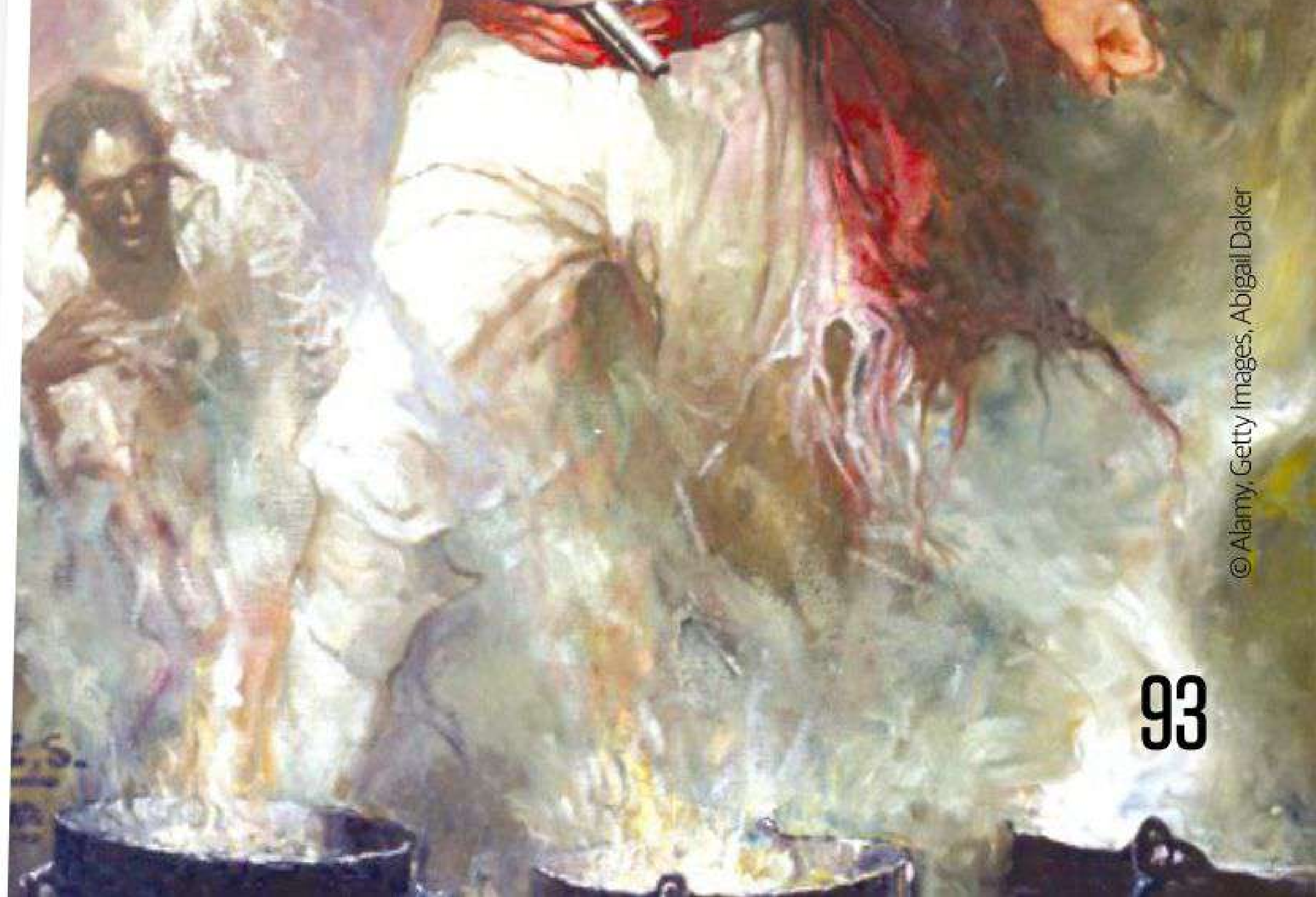
Tales of his lingering ghost, seeking out his lost head, have also been told for years, and there is a legend that his skull is now used as a drinking chalice. He did not gain this notoriety through success or riches, but by what he represented: the insatiable lust for adventure, the audacious nature to fight against insurmountable odds, and a mysterious, feared spectre of a devilish man. We do not know his true name, and we do not know his full story, but we do know what Blackbeard symbolises, even today, and that is the daring and intrepid spirit of piracy.



Blackbeard would light fuses under his hat, to create a cloud of smoke around him

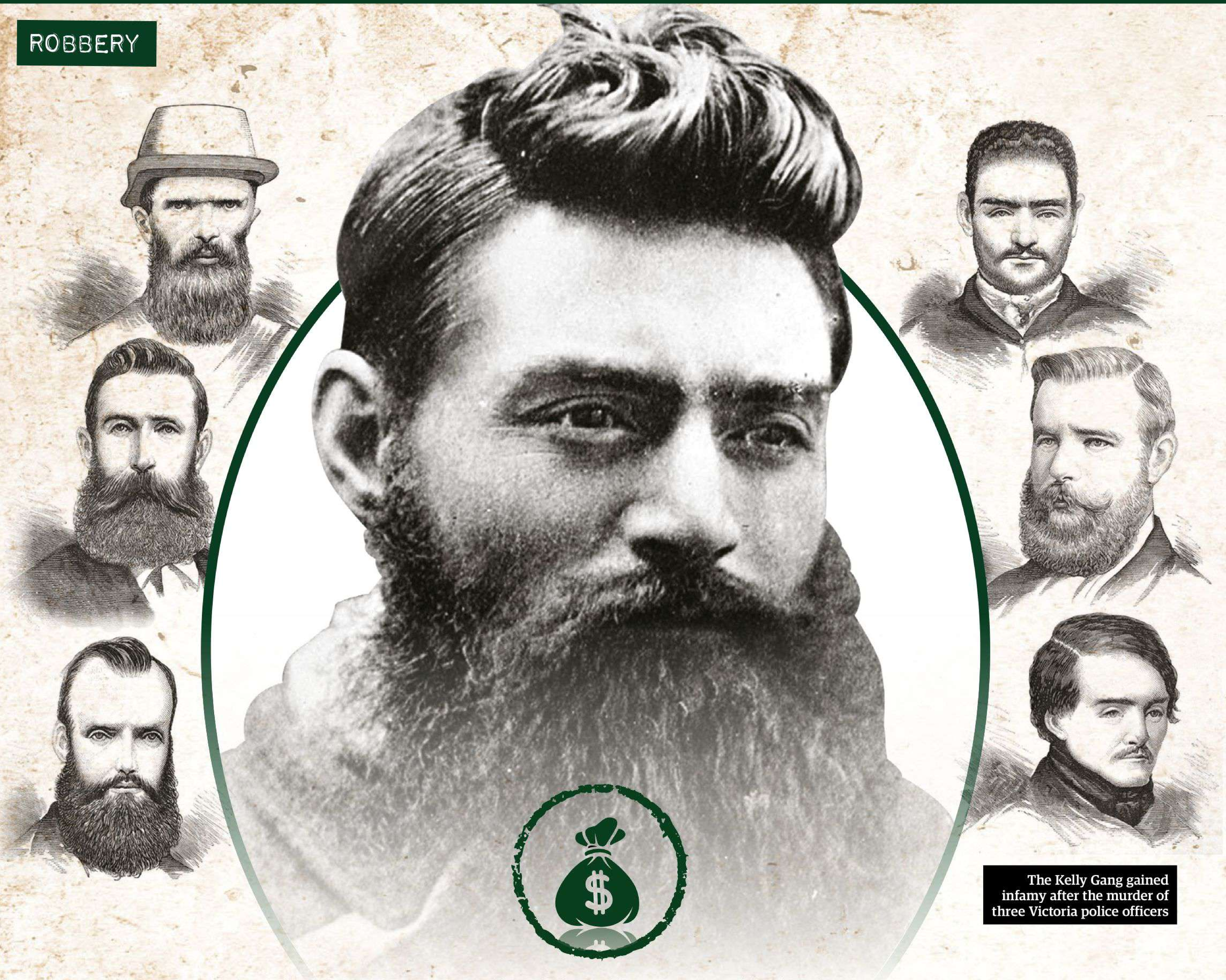


There is a legend that Blackbeard's headless corpse swam around his ship five times



By generating a fearsome reputation, Blackbeard often didn't even have to fight

© Alamy, Getty Images, Abigail Daker



The Kelly Gang gained infamy after the murder of three Victoria police officers

Ned Kelly: Robber or Revolutionary?

He's a national hero to some, a cunning crook to others – why is Australia so divided over one of its most enduring icons?

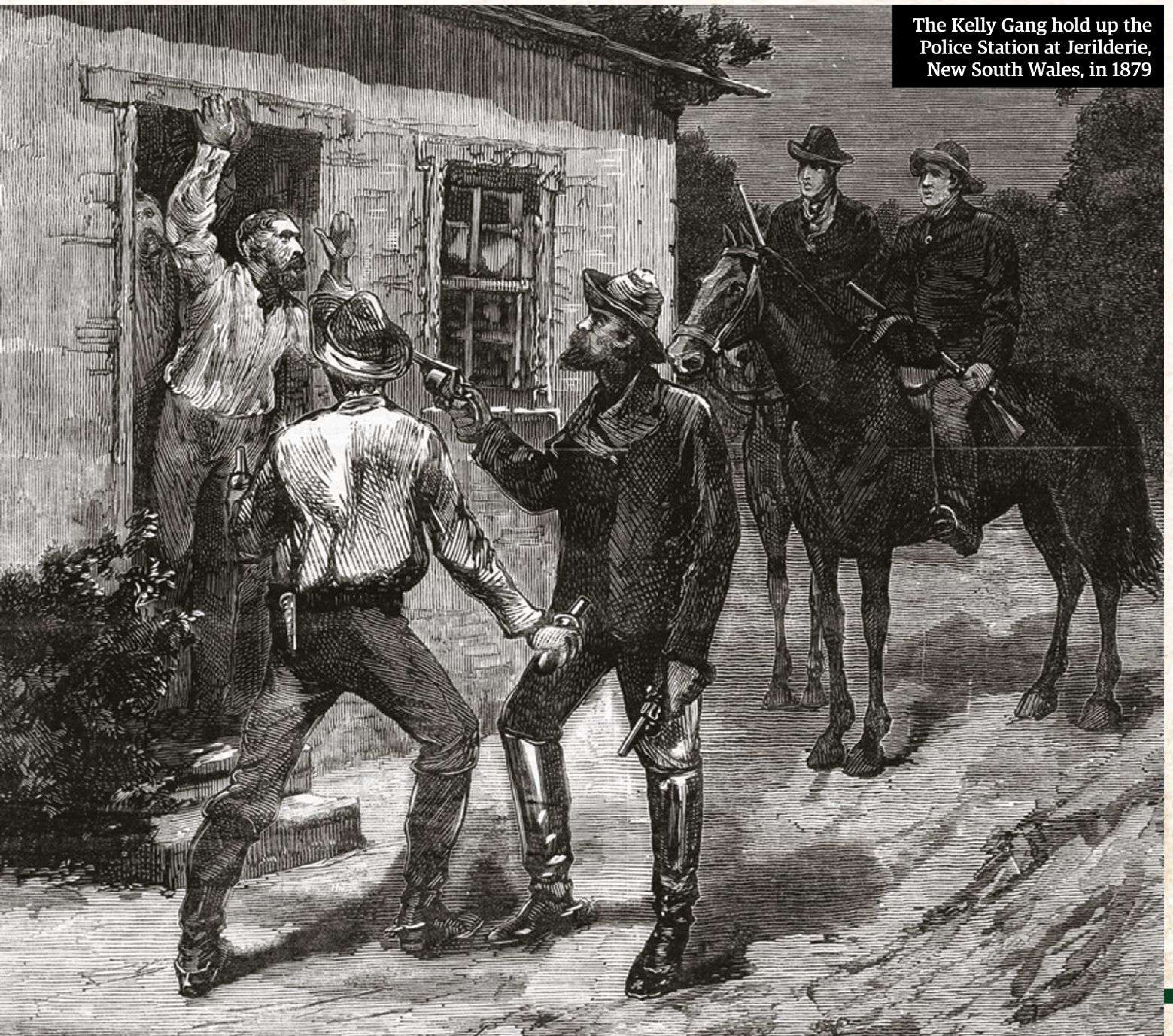
Around 240 kilometres northeast of the city of Melbourne, Victoria, is the township of Greta. It's tree-lined, pastoral and, without closely inspecting a photo of the country surrounding Eleven Mile Creek, you could convince someone that it was the ancestral Irish homelands of some of its 250-odd population. Beyond the road leading through Greta there's a faded "Keep Out!" sign above a sturdy barbed-wire fence and, beyond that, nothing to speak of save more rolling pasture on a wooded backdrop, what looks like the rusted hubs of an ancient cart wheel and a solitary red brick chimney.

This is Kelly country. Despite looking like a fresh breeze would topple it into the dirt, this vestige of a homestead is actually a palace, its original owner – Edward 'Ned' Kelly – a prince of thieves Down Under, and the mythology surrounding his exploits every bit a jewel in Australia's cultural crown. Keen to preserve this monument, Ned's descendants have erected fences to keep tourists with busy hands from finishing the job the elements and gravity started nearly 150 years ago. And who can blame them when there are few such tangible truths to their ancestor's story left today? Where England takes its romanticised, 1,000-year-old Robin Hood story with a pinch of salt, for many Australians Ned Kelly was a bona fide revolutionary who exploded from his humble Selector community in 1878 to defy the corruption of the colonial authorities. For others, he was a dyed-in-the-wool thief, a thug, a killer, an egotist manipulative enough to have spun his own legend to ensure its survival for many generations.

The early part of Ned's history is less divisive. His father, John 'Red' Kelly, was an Irishman who, in 1841 and at the age of 22, was convicted of stealing two pigs and transported to Tasmania. He made the crossing to Victoria in 1848 and ultimately settled with his new wife, Ellen, in the small town of Avenel. Red was a cattle rustler of note who had brushes with the law until his undoing in 1866. Unable to account for a suspicious pile of meat and hide in his possession, Red was given six months of hard labour because he couldn't afford the fine. This brutal sentence would break the 55 year old.

Red didn't separate his home life from his criminal career and young Ned was witness to his father's lawless acquaintances through his formative years. At just ten years old he would have seen the police take Red away from the family, only for his father to die shortly after he was released in December 1866. It's not hard to imagine how, unchecked, this could instil in a wily young man an anti-authoritarian sentiment and the willingness to live outside society. The apple wasn't to fall far from the tree and Ned Kelly was cast in the mould of a future outlaw. Whether or not he was born bad is moot at this point – the draconian penalties of the colonies had set Red Kelly's oldest son on a bitter collision course with the law.

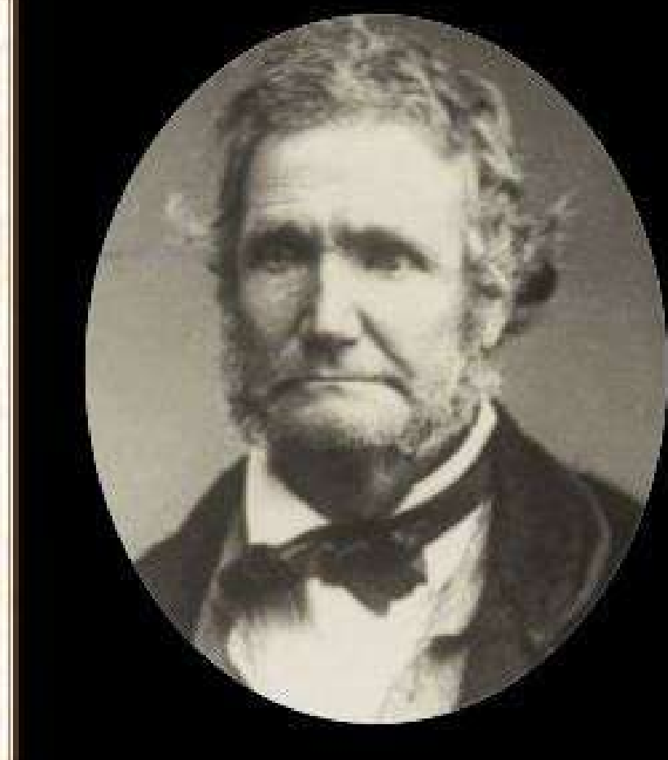
> "He was a dyed-in-the-wool thief, a thug, a killer"



The Kelly Gang hold up the Police Station at Jerilderie, New South Wales, in 1879

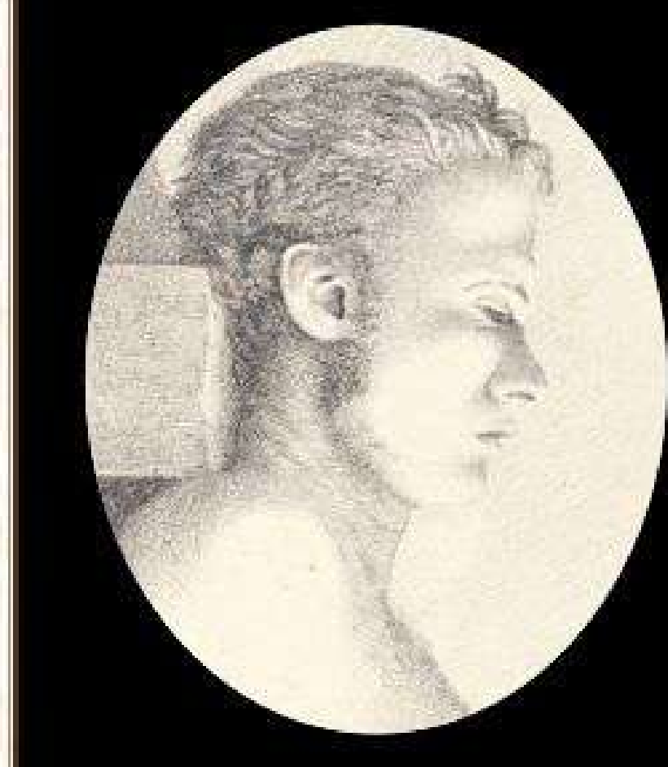
Bandits in the Bush

Escaped convicts who turned to crime in the outback became known as 'bushrangers'



Martin Cash

Cash was sent from Ireland (County Cork) for shooting at someone in a jealous rage. He arrived in Australia in 1828, embarked on a crime spree and then, unbelievably, reformed. He became a police constable in 1859.

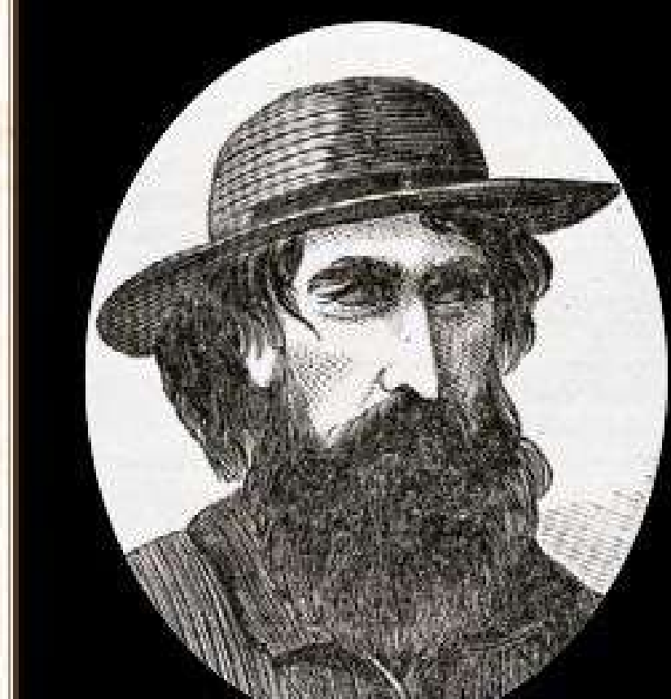


"Wild Colonial Boy"

50 years before Ned Kelly's capture, Jack Donohoe was setting the mold for Australia's bushrangers. His gang of English and Irish convicts robbed from the rich and sold to the poor. He became a legend in Kelly's time and songs were sung about him by the Kelly Gang before their final showdown with the police.

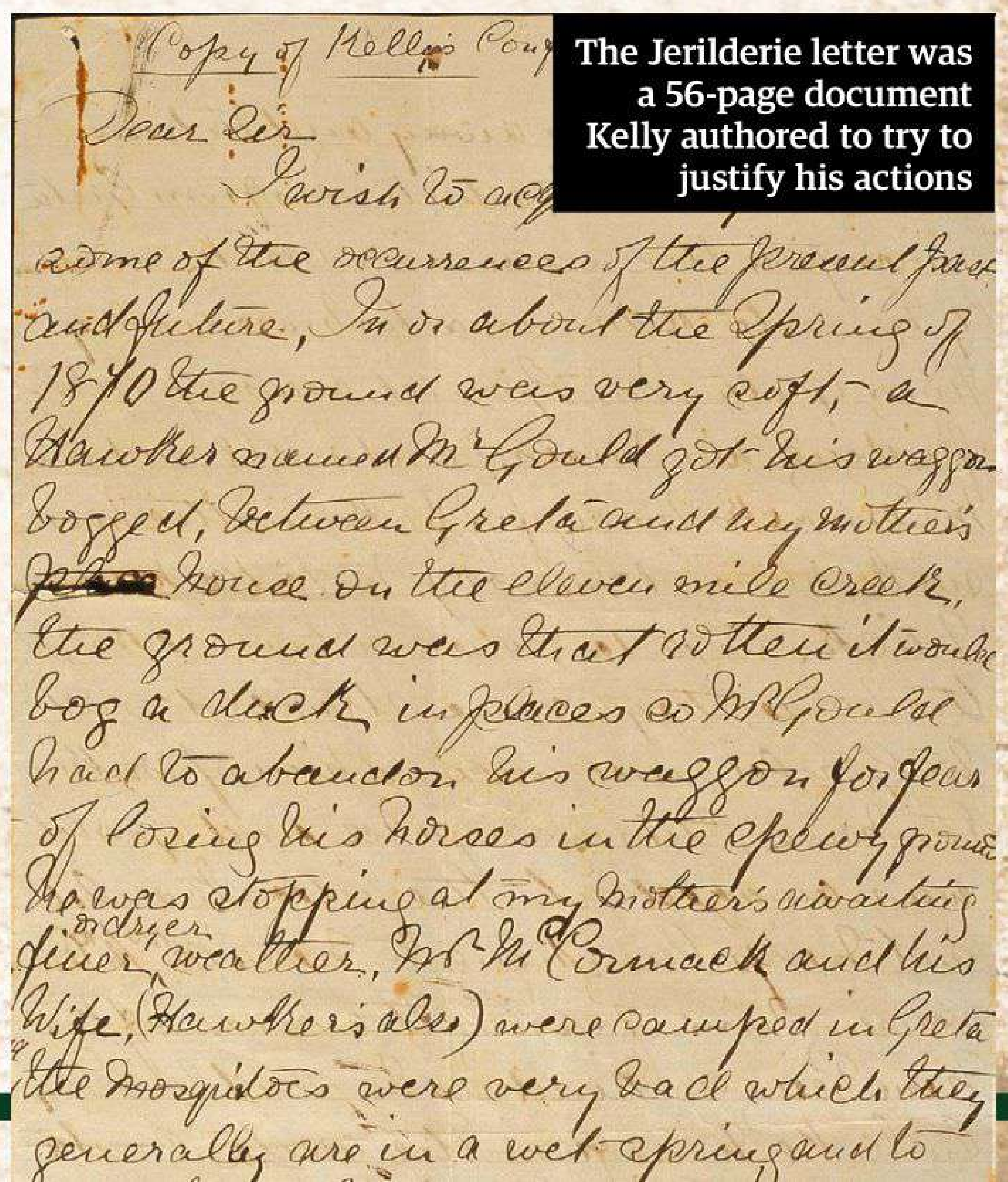
Black Douglas

In 1851, Australia experienced its own gold rush with hundreds of prospectors descending on Victoria. A crime wave ensued and a tracker known as Black Douglas made a brisk trade of fleecing laden fortune seekers of the gold left in their tents near the gold field.



'Mad Dog' Morgan

Dan Morgan's criminal motivations seemed to run to violence for the sake of it as much as profit. He was known for murdering on a whim and had similar anti-authoritarian sentiments to Kelly.

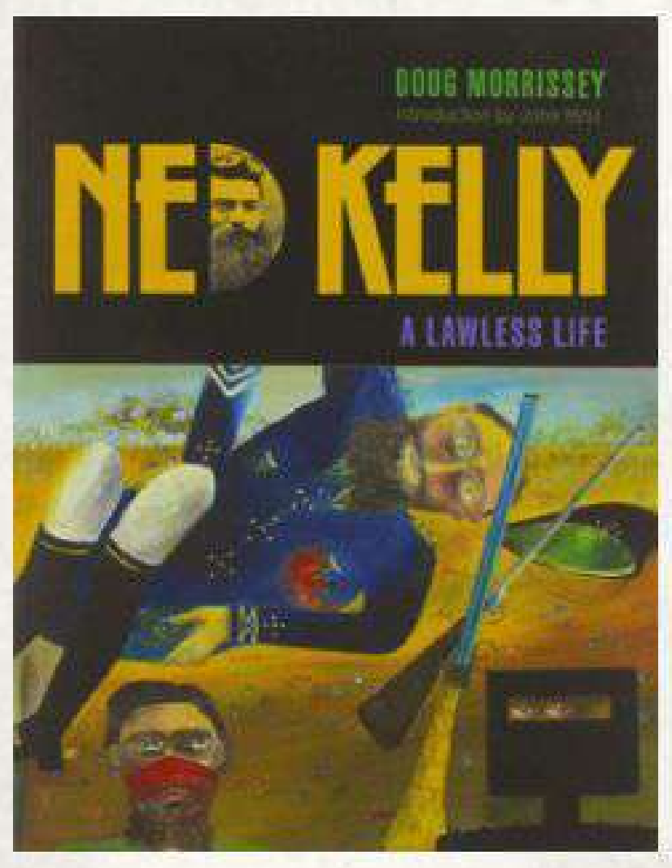


The Jerilderie letter was a 56-page document Kelly authored to try to justify his actions

Copy of Kelly's Con
Dear Sir
I wish to acq
some of the occurrences of the present past
and future, In or about the Spring of
1870 the ground was very soft, a
Hawker named Mr Gould got his waggon
bogged, between Greta and my mother's
~~[illegible]~~ house on the eleven mile Creek,
the ground was that rotten it would
bog a duck in places so Mr Gould
had to abandon his waggon for fear
of losing his horses in the spewy ground
He was stopping at my Mother's awaiting
or dryer
finer weather, Mr McCormack and his
Wife, (Hawkers also) were camped in Greta
the mosquitoes were very bad which they
generally are in a wet spring and to

Villain

Doug Morrissey

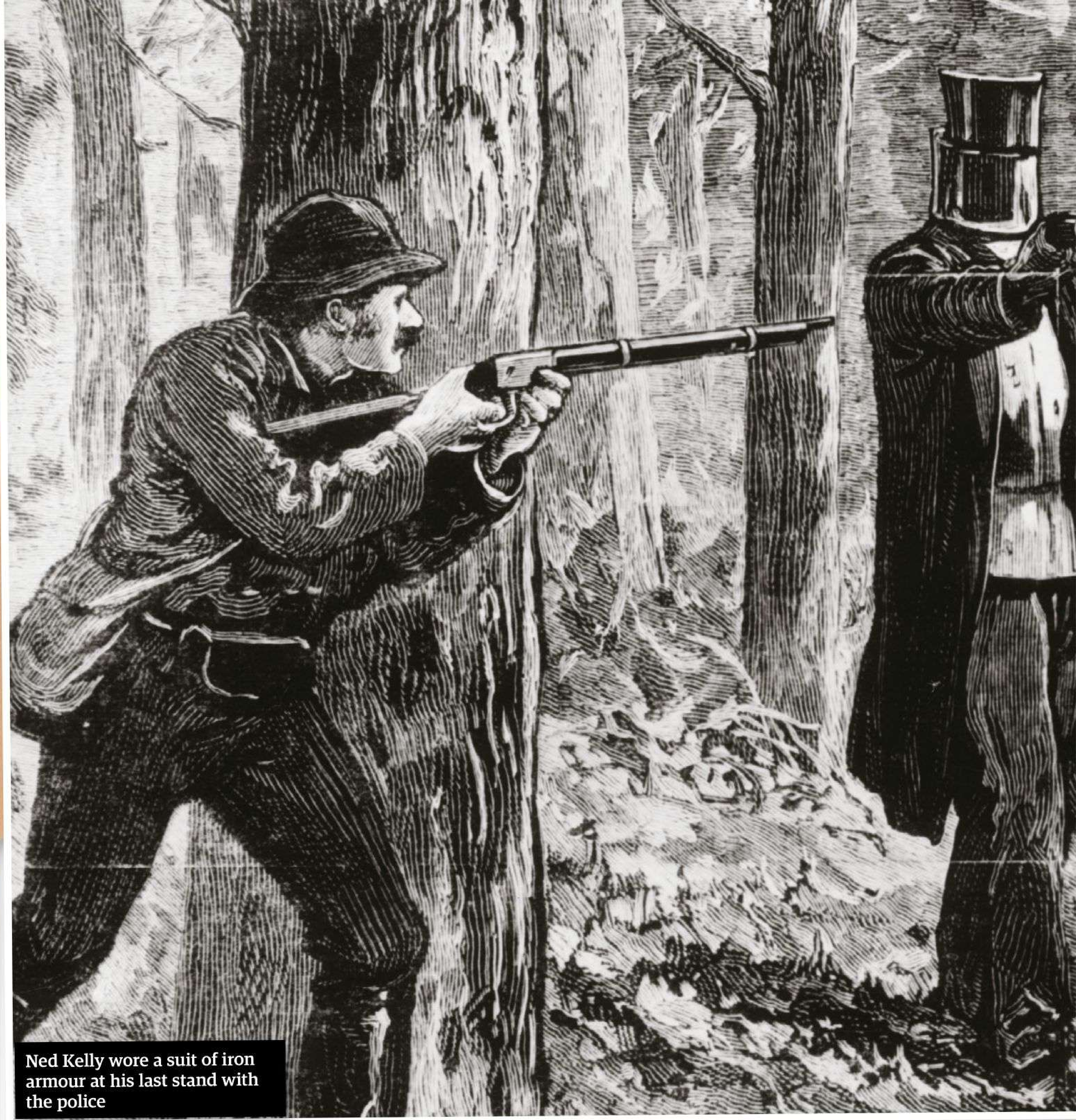


Writer, historian and iconoclast Doug Morrissey is author of *Ned Kelly: A Lawless Life*, a criticism of the "whitewashing of the bushranger's criminal action". It's available from Connor Court Publishing and on Amazon, and was shortlisted in 2016 for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Australian History.

"When you look closely at the history and motives involved, Ned Kelly damns himself by his actions and the wordsmiths find no fault. Kelly was a violent, narcissistic career criminal who bullied those around him and would listen to no counsel but his own. He committed murder and, if his grisly Glenrowan plan had succeeded as he had hoped, he would have been a mass murderer. That he is today regarded as a hero by so many has much to do with Kelly myth, spin and fantasy. The Kelly myth version of history is not what it used to be – there are plenty of Australians who crave the truth and see Ned as a horse thief and killer, no more no less. However, the myth fascinates the Australian imagination and Ned is seen as an iconic Aussie hero when, really, he deserves neither accolade.

"The Kelly myth began in Ned's own lifetime. He was a good publicist for his own cause and he played the 'gentleman' bushranger role to the hilt. Despite the public's enchantment with 'Ned the bad boy with a gun', he was still regarded as a murderer and a criminal by his contemporaries. It was only after WWII that authors enamoured of the Kelly legend began writing about him as a political revolutionary and people's champion. This was when the idea of a Republic of North East Victoria came into its own – something that had no currency during Ned's lifetime. The evidence for all of this exists only in the fantasy-filled brains of Kelly's later admirers, who have misinterpreted his motivations and have little understanding of the Greta community or the pioneering times in which Kelly lived. Ned's 'bravery' was not as the public and media today choose to see it. He had run out of bank robbery money and was out of options, badly wounded and perhaps a little drunk, he took on the police in a last ditch desperation to end a bushranger's life he tells us he had grown tired of. He had always said the police would not take him alive; but when he was wounded and lying on the ground, he pleaded for his life to be spared.

"The comparison to Robin Hood definitely does not measure up to the historical reality. Ned robbed banks to obtain money for protection, shelter and food. There was never any distribution of funds outside his criminal circle and the destruction of bank records was more for show than an effective release from debt for poor farmers. The books, television series, movies and so forth all perpetuate the myth, and people enjoy a version of history where goodies and baddies battle one another. The question, as always, is how do you decide who are the goodies and who are the baddies involved? In Ned's case, the answer is simple: he lived a lawless life as a criminal predator and never apologised for the murder and mayhem he caused. Is this the kind of celebrity folk hero Australians and the world should be celebrating?"

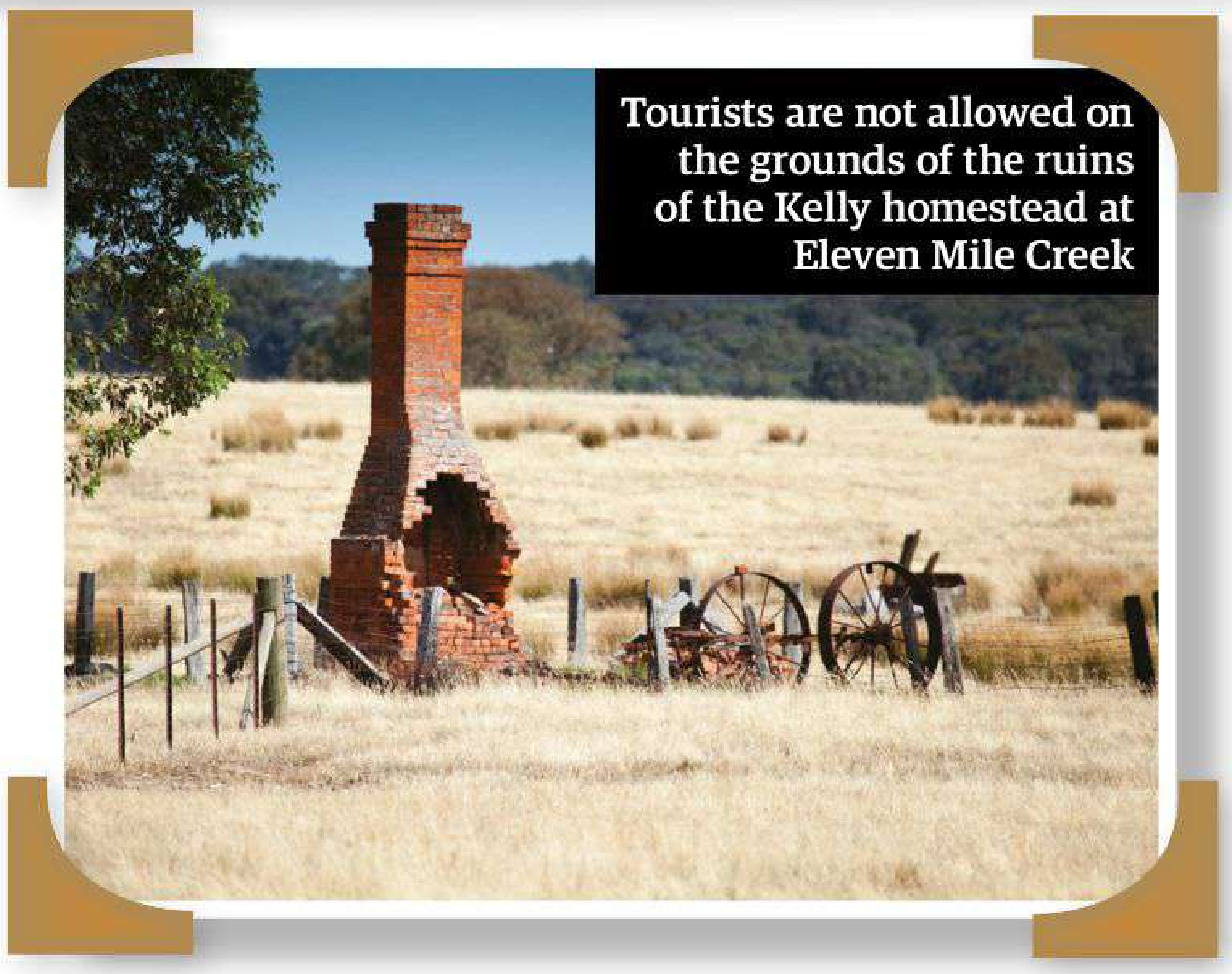


Ned Kelly wore a suit of iron armour at his last stand with the police

Over the next ten years, before he had thoroughly burned his bridges with two Australian colonies, Ned built up a criminal curriculum vitae that seemed to put him under a cloud of suspicion for so much as setting foot outside his homestead. From the age of 14 until his mid-20s, he was responsible for numerous counts of robbery in Victoria and New South Wales. Kelly trail-blazed muggings, horse-thievery and acts of violence on either side of the border, finding a nemesis (and others say at first, a friend) in local policeman Alexander Fitzpatrick. After apparently shooting the constable in the wrist when he came to arrest his brother Dan, he turned outlaw by fleeing into the Bush and Australian mythology.

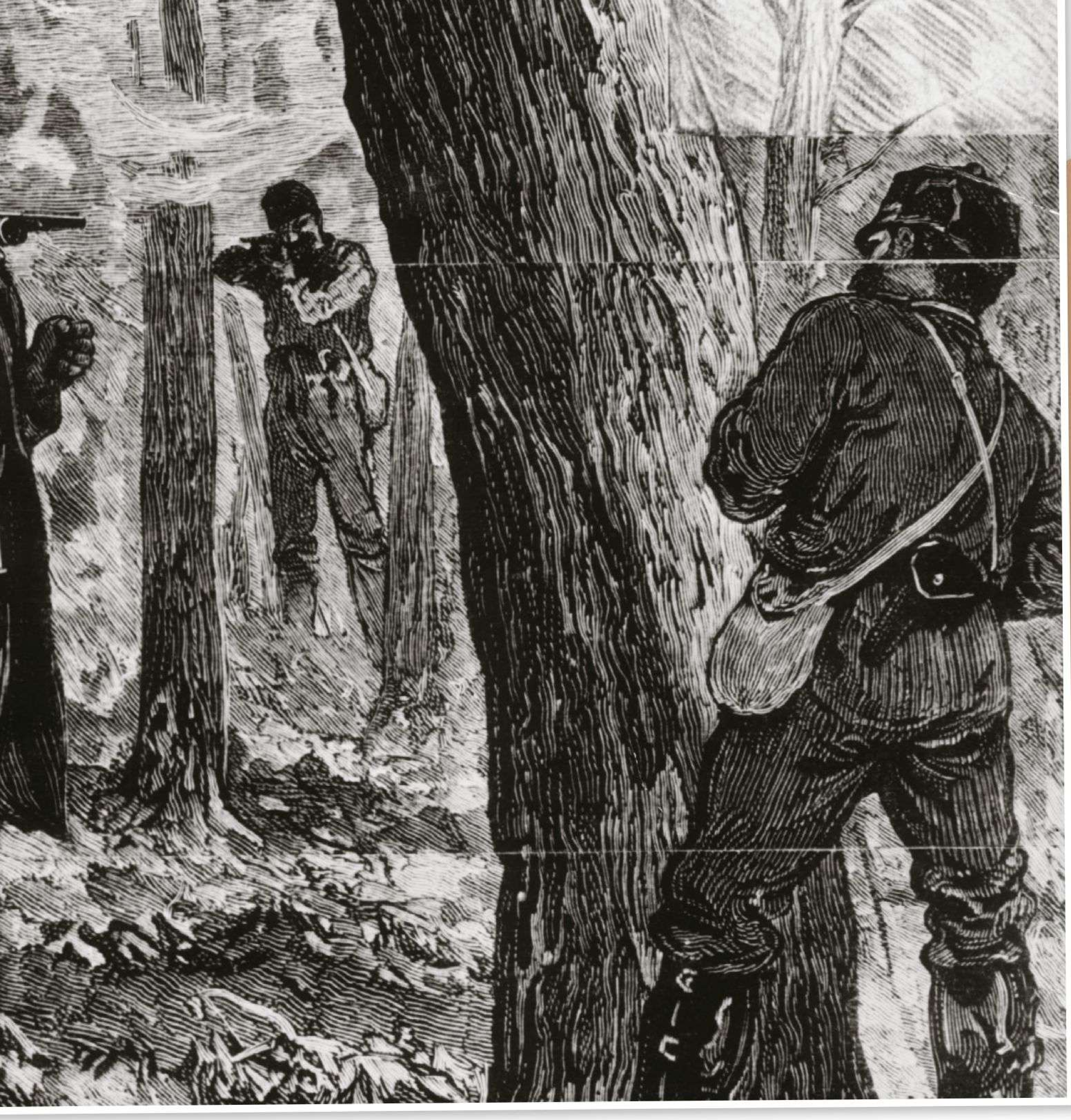
Ned always seems to have had some excuse or justification for his crimes. When he was caught in possession of a stolen horse he was looking after for Isaiah Wright, he claimed he didn't know it was stolen. The subsequent brawl with the arresting policeman landed him three years in Pentridge Prison, which included a three-month stretch in a stinking prison hulk. Having taken the fall for someone else's crime, this was a matter of honour that required settling as far as hot-headed Ned was concerned, and he insisted on a boxing match with Wright, which Ned won, of course.

There was an alternative version of events to the assault on constable Fitzpatrick, too. Kelly said he wasn't even present when the policeman came to his homestead drunk and threatened his mother. According to Kelly, a brawl had ensued with Dan Kelly in which Fitzpatrick hurt himself on a protruding door lock. The constable took a beating and took off, then said he had been set upon by the Kelly brothers and that the wound to his wrist was from a bullet. It was an argument that would have saved Fitzpatrick face, as well as his career.



Tourists are not allowed on the grounds of the ruins of the Kelly homestead at Eleven Mile Creek

"Had I robbed, plundered, ravished and murdered everything I met," Ned Kelly wrote in a letter to Fitzpatrick's superior and Victorian parliamentarian Donald Cameron once he had fled the authorities, "my character could not be painted blacker than it is at present, thank God my conscience is as clear as the snow in Peru." At least of the sullied Kelly name and Ned's absence of guilt, we can be fairly sure.



> “Ned built up a criminal curriculum vitae that seemed to put him under a cloud of suspicion for so much as setting foot outside his homestead”

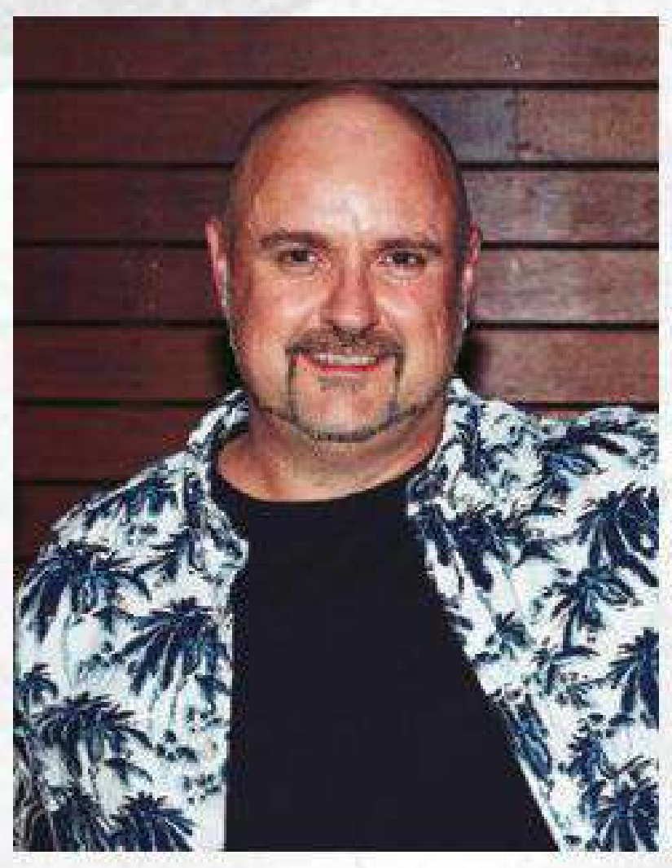
In the famous Cameron letter, Ned painstakingly outlines his grievances with a police force hell-bent on bringing him down, that they “use to be blowing that they would shoot me first and then cry surrender”, and that while he was on the run “they used to repeatedly rush into the house, revolver in hand, and upset milk dishes, empty the flour out onto the ground, break tins of eggs, throw the mat out of the cask onto the floor, and dirty and destroy all the provisions, which can be proved; and shove the girls in front of them into the rooms like dogs and abuse and insult them”.

In the same letter, Ned explains his version of a pivotal event, remembered as the infamous Stringybark Creek murders of three policemen on 26 October 1878. We know for sure that Ned and three others – Dan Kelly, Joe Byrne and Steve Hart – caught a party of policemen, sent to capture the gang, off-guard in their camp. Of the four policemen, three died – namely Michael Kennedy, Thomas Lonigan and Michael Scanlan – while the other, Thomas McIntyre, escaped to tell the tale. Ned’s account reads like the script of a lone ranger

The State Library of Victoria made painstaking efforts to collect and assemble pieces of Kelly’s armour

Hero

Brad Webb



Brad Webb is a writer and webmaster of ironoutlaw.com, a dedicated Ned Kelly website that has been around in various forms since the dawn of the Internet. Attracting over 350,000 visitors a year, it has become a valuable resource for anyone wanting to find out information about the Ned Kelly gang.

Do you think Ned Kelly’s name has been maligned over the years?

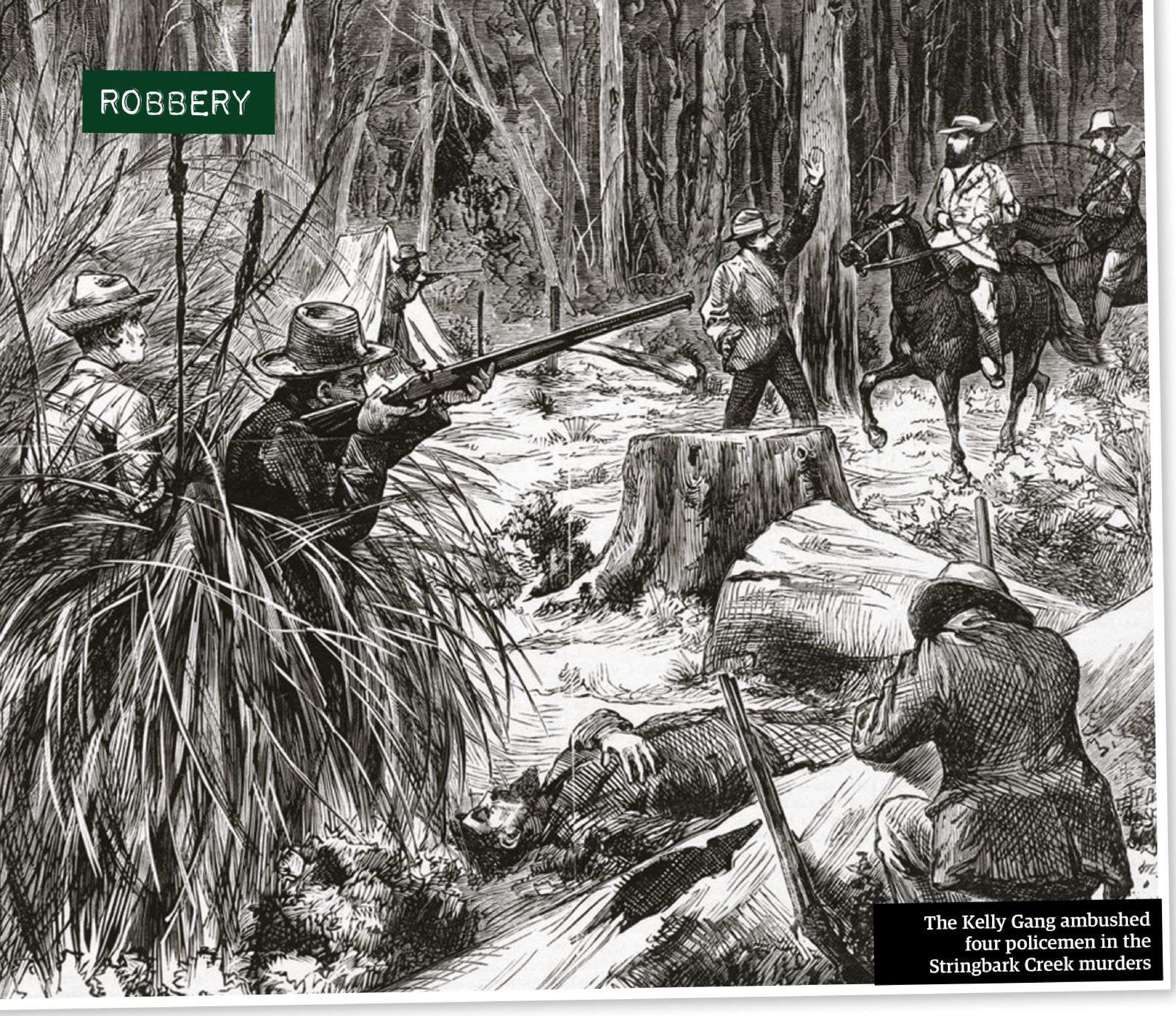
Ned made a number of enemies during his short 25 years. Land barons, police, and judiciary were keen to hold Ned and his type at bay. Even after he was convicted of murder, the presiding judge, Sir Redmond Barry, refused Ned’s barrister’s plea for an appeal to the Full Court, an outrageous travesty of natural justice. It is the Royal Commission which is possibly Ned Kelly’s greatest legacy – Ned was an outspoken critic in the way the police conducted themselves not only in the pursuit of the Kelly Gang, but in the way they manhandled the entirety of northeast Victoria. The findings from the Royal Commission created a tradition of public accountability and self-examination, which still exists within the Victorian police force today, and it helped lay the foundation of what is arguably one of the world’s best police forces.

Did he always have the support of the Greta community?

Greta, like many small towns located throughout northeast Victoria, primarily consisted of poor selectors. The Kelly clan was no exception. Like other families in the district, they relied on each other for support and friendship. Selectors faced resistance and outright hostility from squatters who used their superior economic position to manipulate the system, ensuring they retained control of the best land along rivers and creeks – known as ‘peacocking.’ It took the government many years to realise the system was ineffective and for conditions to improve. Meanwhile, a generation of selectors grew up with a precarious toehold in the colony’s productive life and a history of antagonism. It was against this backdrop that the Kelly outbreak evolved.

Why has Ned Kelly become such a powerful icon for many Australians?

After Ned’s execution, the dominant, anti-Kelly literature portrayed a ruthless criminal, while the image of a popular hero was kept alive in oral tradition and folk songs. Then, some 50 years after Ned’s death, ‘the tide of the published word turned’ and Ned Kelly was seen in a more sympathetic light. First of the major pro-Kelly works was JJ Kenneally’s *The Complete Inner History Of The Kelly Gang and Their Pursuers*, published in 1929 and rarely out of print for the next 50 years. Each week, on average, there is a newspaper story published somewhere in the world with Ned Kelly as the topic. Ned has nearly 11 million pieces of information available online through a single Google search. He has been commemorated through music, words, paintings and film. More books, songs, and websites have been written about the Kelly Gang than any other group of Australian historical figures. And when you add the wide variety of Kellyana to the amalgam – such as clothing, toys, alcohol, tattoos and so on – then Ned Kelly truly is Australia’s greatest folk hero.



The Kelly Gang ambushed four policemen in the Stringybark Creek murders

Kelly's death mask, a mould of the bushranger's features taken after his death – a common practice in the Victorian era

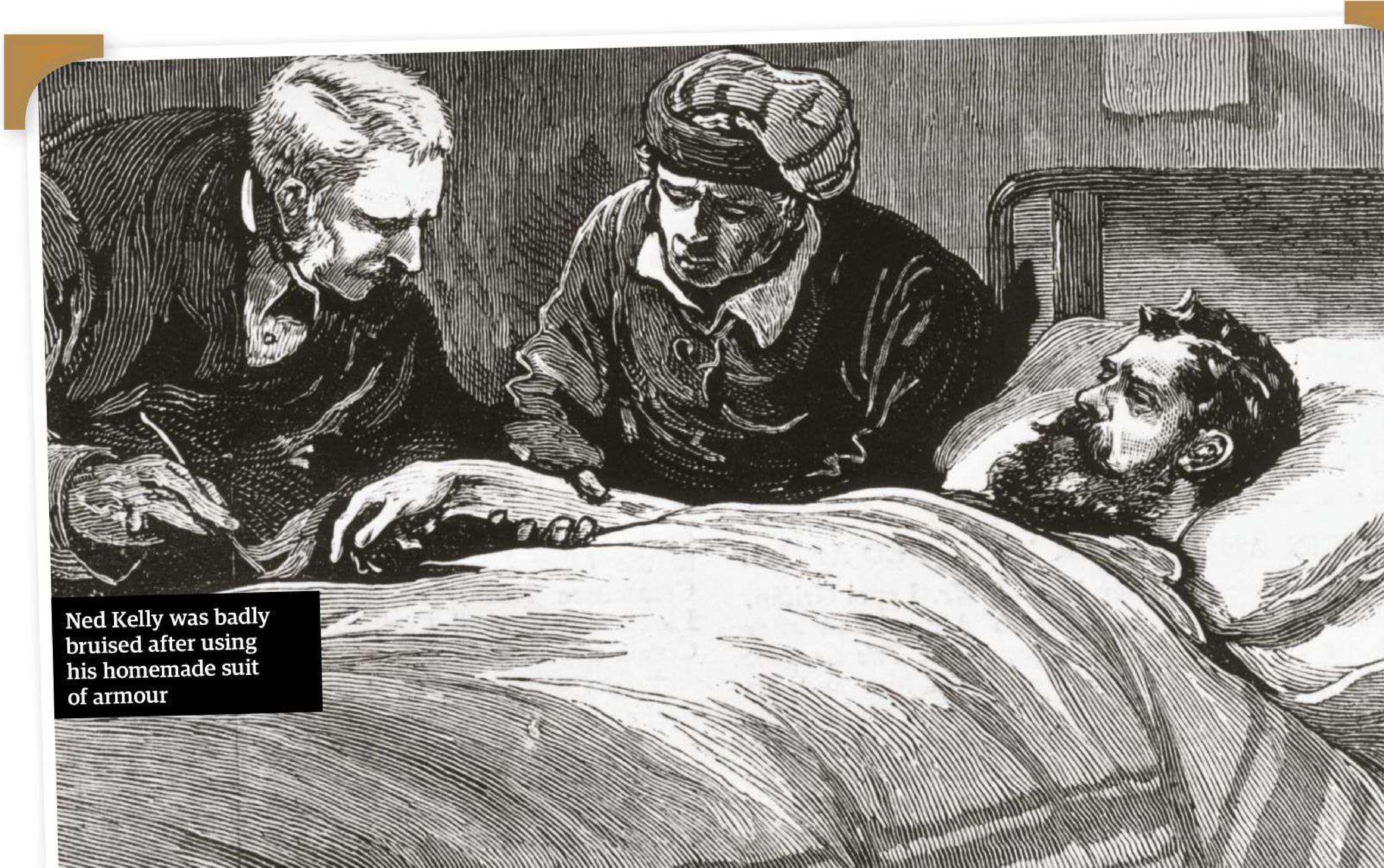
> "The four men dropped off the grid, making camp in the Bush near the Kelly homestead while the police patrolled the towns"

film, giving the men the opportunity to surrender and taking life only when he felt that his own was threatened. "I gave him my word I would give them a chance," he told McIntyre as the four outlaws awaited the return of the other two policemen. And, when he killed Kennedy: "I put his cloak over him and left him as honourable as I could, and if they were my own brothers I could not be more sorry for them."

The three dead men were of Irish descent. It's possible Kelly would indeed have felt he had some connection with them, although McIntyre didn't seem to think so: "...like a great many young bushmen he prided himself more on his Australian birth than he did upon his extraction from any particular race. A favourite expression of his was: 'I will let them see what one native can do'." We begin to see how Ned Kelly became an icon for a new nation.

After Stringybark Creek, in early 1879, it seems the four outlaws had committed themselves to other serious crimes. They robbed two banks, stealing gold, silver, sovereigns and promissory notes to the tune of several thousand pounds, around 1 million Australian dollars today. The reward money for the capture of the Ned Kelly Gang sky-rocketed to £4,000 in New South Wales – or £1,000 for any one of the outlaws – with a further £4,000 offered by the state of Victoria. The four men completely dropped off the grid, making camp in the Bush near the Kelly homestead at Eleven Mile Creek while the police patrolled the towns, unable to match the rangers' bushcraft and uncomfortable at the thought of straying too far into unfamiliar territory after the Stringybark incident. After a year of half-hearted attempts to track Ned and his gang down, locals had lost confidence and respect for the police. By June 1880, the handsome rewards had been withdrawn and the gang's status as outlaws expired, though they were under no illusion that they would be free citizens. Bolstered by their previous encounters with the police, they decided to rob the banks in Benalla, Victoria, but would first shoot dead an informant under police protection as a distraction. They dispatched Aaron Sherritt and disarmed the four police protecting him with ease, then made their way to Glenrowan with the intention of destroying the rail lines to prevent reinforcements from arriving. Little did they know, this would also be the end of the line for the gang.

The most famous of Ned Kelly relics, a helmet and suit of armour, are housed in the State Library of Victoria. They are likely to endure far longer than the blood-stained green sash he was awarded as a boy aged 11, when he saved seven-year-old Richard Shelton from drowning in Hughes Creek, and which he wore underneath his metal suit at his last stand at Glenrowan. The symbolism here is palpable, depending on which camp you fall into: he's a boyhood hero clad in either the armour of his own righteous indignation or of an iron-cold murderer. Even Ned's intent behind the armour, if not the siege and gunfight at Mrs Jones' Hotel in Glenrowan where he wore it, is subject to considerable degrees of interpretation. The plates covered just about every part of the men's torsos and heads back to front with iron impenetrable to police gunfire – but not their legs. It seems an obvious weak spot, and that's just how Ned



Ned Kelly was badly bruised after using his homemade suit of armour

Kelly was stopped: with a hail of bullets to his lower limbs. Was the armour intended to protect them from a gun fight on the level playing field in town or, as some suspect, from survivors defending themselves in the train wreck that never happened, from an eyrie high above in the railway cutting?

With police and militia closing in, the Kelly Gang threw a party to put the hostages they took at Mrs Jones's Hotel in Glenrowan – including some sympathisers – at ease. The rudiments of a Kelly following had begun and there were some supporters of his even among the townsfolk. But whatever revolution he might have had planned, this was the Kelly gang's last stand. After the police and militia lay siege to the hotel, three of them lay dead and only Ned survived. After the bullet wounds to his legs were patched up, he was put on trial, defiant right up until the hangman's noose stretched his neck. A petition, signed by over 30,000 (some say coerced) supporters, was submitted to the governor of Victoria, but to no avail. Judge Sir Redmond Barry donned the death cap and that was the end of it – but not before Kelly had the last word. Apparently, when judge Barry uttered the words that should have sunk the temerity of the condemned man, Ned was said to reply: "May God have mercy on your soul. I will go a little further than that and say I will see you there when I go."

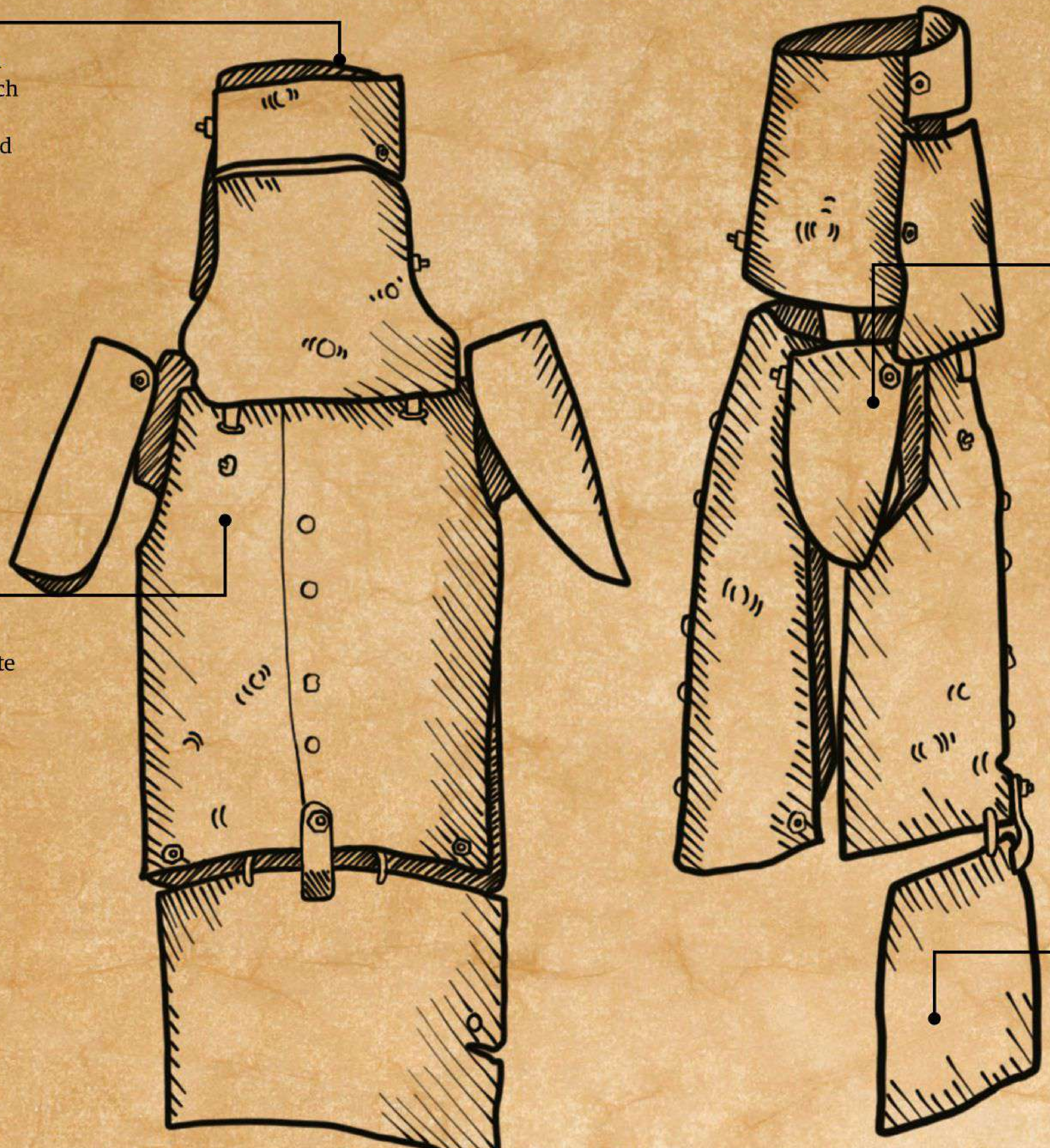
The hero or villain argument is a subjective one to say the least, especially when extrapolating black and white from the grey mists of 19th century Australia. Ned Kelly certainly did some bad things and he likely did some of them with less than the altruism that is to be expected of a hero – though it's very likely that the authorities he railed against were no better than him.

As the remains of the truth crumble away, brick by brick, over time, we are left with a folk tale that is familiar in every corner of the world. The martyred revolutionary is a popular totem – and who knows what form Ned Kelly will take years and centuries from now?

Iron Outlaws

How effective were the Kelly gang's suits of armour?

Forged from mouldboards, the thick metal parts of a plough, it took some time and a little volunteer help from Kelly sympathisers to put the four suits of armour of the Kelly gang together. Even then, they would have had to learn how to move and shoot in it. It was a hefty 41.4 kilograms – or as much as a bag of wheat – and half as much as Ned Kelly weighed again. It would have slowed him down significantly and also made accurate shooting near impossible. However, even at point-blank range it proved impenetrable to a bullet fired from a Martini-Henry rifle. So, despite remonstrations from the rest of the gang, once the armour had been put to the test, they were quickly won round. Ned also armed the gang with sawn-off Winchester repeater rifles (the famous gun that 'won the West' in the US), the rapid fire compensating for the handicap of the armour. The gang would also have to learn how to wear it, to take advantage of their newly bulletproof bodies and unlearn old gunslinging habits made impractical or impossible by the wall of metal they would be wearing around them.



Helmet
The helmet had a visor – a thin slit in the front – which put a big restriction on the gang's peripheral vision and shooting accuracy.

Shoulders
Plates protected the men just over the shoulder. They would not be protected from a bullet to the hand.

Vital organs
Covering the men's torso back to front, the chest plate also provided an anchor for the the shoulder plates and helmet, attached with leather straps and rivets.

Exposed
A plate hung to protect Kelly's groin, but the legs were left unprotected. Why this was seems a point of some contention.

© Alamy, Getty Images.

The real Wicked Lady

Did a mask-wearing, pistol-packing royalist noblewoman really become a feared and bloodthirsty legend of the highways?

On 4 May 1634, a baby girl was born who would one day enter the dark annals of England's criminal history. She was Katherine Ferrers, the infamous Wicked Lady of folklore, a legend among highway robbers. Yet was Katherine really a bloodthirsty killer who consorted with a rakish highwayman, or has history done her a grievous disservice?

Katherine was born in Hertfordshire to Knighton Ferrers and his well-born heiress wife, Lady Katherine Walters. Over the centuries leading up to the little girl's birth, her Protestant family had done rather well out of the royal family, and were particular favourites of those titans of the monarchy, Henry VIII and Edward VI. Thanks to their unquestioning loyalty to the crown, the Ferrers had been awarded extensive territories and property, and for young Katherine, the future looked set. She could look forward to a respectable marriage and an uneventful life as a society bride.

> Katherine wasn't in fact related to the notorious Laurence 'Wicked' Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers, who was hanged for murder

Yet fate took an unexpected turn when tragedy struck the house of Ferrers. In just a few short years, Katherine's elder brother, father and grandfather all died, leaving her as the sole heir to the family fortune when she was just six years old. Her widowed mother swiftly and prudently married Sir Simon Fanshawe, a prominent royalist, and in 1642 the Fanshawe household moved to Oxford and joined the wartime court of the embattled King Charles I.

Yet Katherine's mother died that same year, leaving her young daughter in the care of her stepfather. A career soldier, Fanshawe could hardly put his military career on hold to care for another man's child, so he looked around for someone to take Katherine off his hands. As the Battle of Marston Moor loomed, Katherine was therefore on the move again, this time to Huntingdonshire and the home of her step-uncle, Richard, and his wife, Ann. In fact, Simon Fanshawe's military career was curtailed in 1644 when he was taken prisoner by the parliamentarians, and the rest of his family didn't have any better luck!

Thanks to their unquestioning loyalty to the king during the conflict, when the tide turned in favour of the parliamentarians, the price to the royalist Fanshawe family was high. Their extensive and valuable estates were placed in the hands of local commissioners, and their income was seized, plunging the once-wealthy household into penury. By now 13 years old and due to inherit a fortune when she became a bride, Katherine's guardians decided that the time had come to marry her off. The primary candidate for groom was Thomas Fanshawe, Simon's nephew, and a marriage to him meant that Katherine's untouched and

Only one portrait of Lady Katherine Ferrers remains, showing her on her wedding day as a teenage bride enormous inheritance would remain safely in the Fanshawe family.

Thomas was just 16 and, on their marriage, inherited sole control of his new wife's fortune. Almost immediately, Katherine found her property and estates sold off, and the money was used to replenish the depleted Fanshawe coffers.

At this point, the facts in the case of Katherine Ferrers become entangled with the twisting legends of her criminal career. History doesn't tell us how the marriage between Catherine and Thomas went, whether she resented him or he frittered away her money. Nor does it provide us with evidence to back up the oft-told story that she fell in love with a highwayman and, bored at home and unloved by her husband, was sucked gleefully into a life of crime.

Whatever the truth behind the legend, Thomas Ferrers was frequently absent from the marital home, drawn away for business and, we might suppose, the opportunity to spend his wife's inheritance. This meant that Katherine, the sort of beautiful, young bride beloved of storytellers, was often left alone at home to reflect not only on her absent husband, but also the fortune that she had been forced to give away to a man whom she had not chosen to marry.

Popular legend asserts that Katherine was so bored by her new life that she packed up her belongings and returned to her father's old home at Markyate Cell. Here she was tempted into robbery by a dashing farmer and part-time highwayman named Ralph Chaplin, though in fact he appears to have been an entirely fictional creation. Yet a good folk tale never lets fact get in the way of fiction, and Katherine's mysterious death was guaranteed to add fuel to a smouldering fire.

The 17th century was an age of highway robbers, and Katherine Ferrers was about to join their ranks. Either with or without the assistance of the mysterious and possibly fictional Ralph Chaplin, she took to the roads around her estate at Markyate Cell, determined to make back the money she had lost. Katherine wasn't only linked with robbery, but with an assortment of crimes and misdemeanours, ranging from murder to cattle rustling and arson too. Let us not forget, however, that this was a country riven by civil war, a land in which petty crime was rife, and where arson and cattle rustling were hardly unheard of.

According to the legend, Katherine and Ralph terrorised the land, and became passionate lovers, with the highwayman thrilling the lady in a way that her husband could not. Disguised in a dark suit with tricorn hat, mask and loaded pistol, the ruthless Wicked Lady took to the roads, escaping her stultifying home by the means of a hidden staircase. Yet Katherine and Ralph's reign of terror couldn't last forever, and some versions of

After Katherine's death, her husband sold off all her remaining lands, and grew very rich on the profits

> "Left at home to reflect on the fortune that she had been forced to give to a man whom she had not chosen to marry"

© Getty

Margaret Lockwood and James Mason prepare to ride into cinematic history in *The Wicked Lady*

The Wicked Lady Skelton

The modern-day version of the legend of Katherine Ferrers owes a huge debt to Magdalen King-Hall's 1944 novel, *Life And Death Of The Wicked Lady Skelton*. The book became a minor cause célèbre when it was adapted into the hugely successful 1945 film, *The Wicked Lady*, starring Margaret Lockwood as a steely, glamorous highwaywoman, alongside James Mason – then at the height of his box-office powers – as her roguish lover. Lockwood's performance as the murderous Barbara Worth caused a scandal thanks to the low-cut gowns her character wore, and extensive re-shoots were required before the censors agreed to pass the film for general release.

The book was adapted again by Michael Winner nearly 40 years later, though of course in Winner's notorious hands the legend of the Wicked Lady became rather more earthy! Lockwood's décolletage might have caused a few raised eyebrows, but Winner – ever on the lookout for a way to grab the headlines – went one better than low-cut dresses. Instead, he dispensed with the gowns altogether in one notorious scene, guaranteeing that his version of this oft-told tale remains one of the most scandalous and certainly the most saucy!

Now known as Cell Park, legend has it that the Wicked Lady kept her headquarters at Markyate Cell

Faye Dunaway and John Gielgud starred in Michael Winner's racy 1983 adaptation of the story

the story claim that Ralph was shot dead during an attempted robbery on Finchley Common. Overcome with grief and fury, Katherine went on a killing spree until she too was shot as she tried to rob a wagon on Nomansland Common in Wheathampstead, just north of St Albans.

A second version of the events of that fateful night claims that Katherine was the one shot that evening. Her lover, Ralph Chaplin, was caught trying to escape from the scene. Legend has it that he was executed that night on the common, and conveniently buried in an unmarked grave. Although wounded, Katherine tried to drag herself home to Markyate Cell, dying in the attempt.

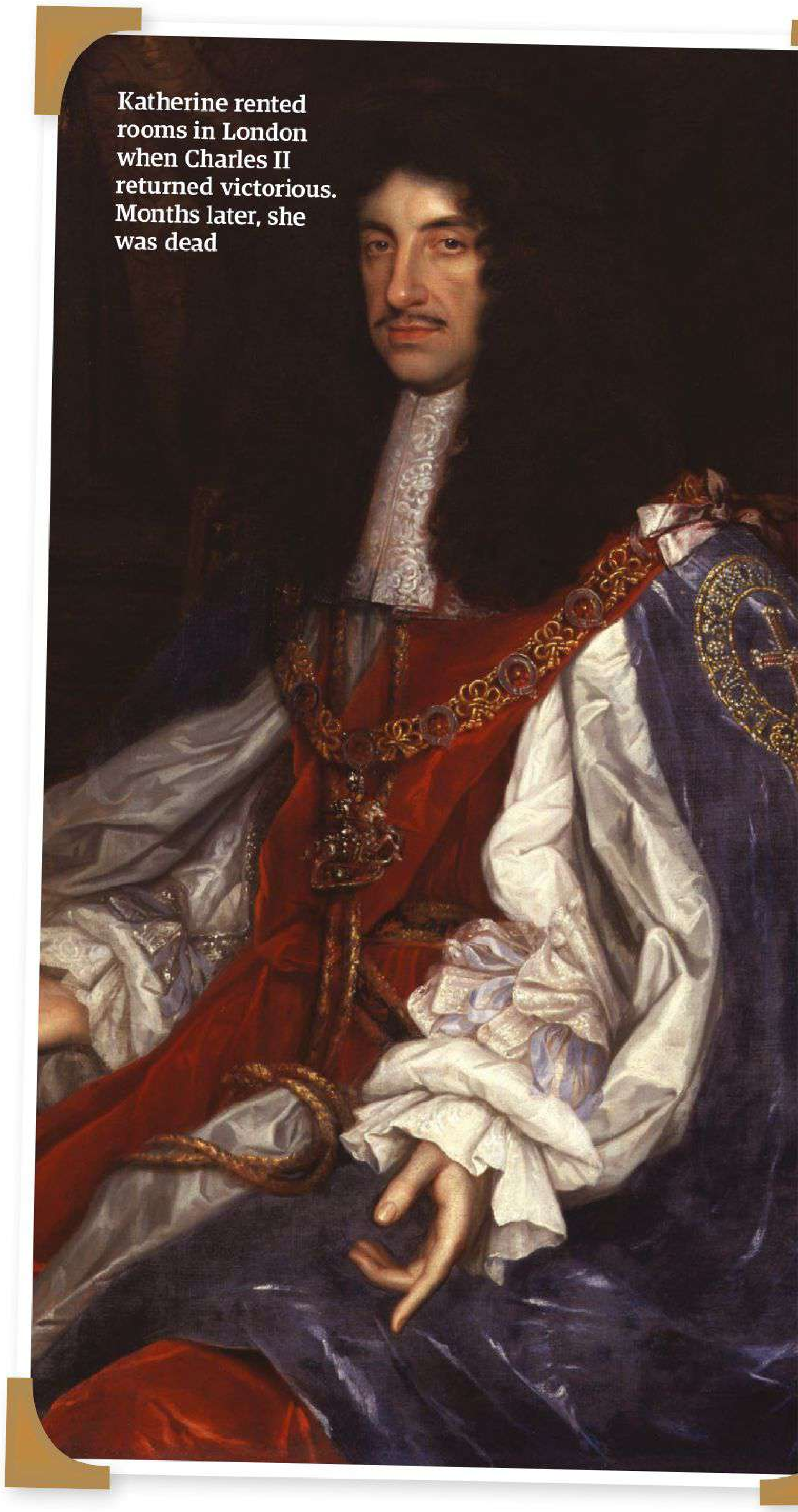
When Katherine was found on the road to Markyate Cell, she was still clad in a disguise of men's clothes. Later that day, her jet-black horse was found, riderless, roaming the area. Fearing for the reputation of the mistress they loved, her servants gathered up the body of the Wicked Lady and carried it home for the final time. Her remains were buried not in the Fanshawe family vault, but at St Mary's Church in Ware, and she was laid to rest by night.

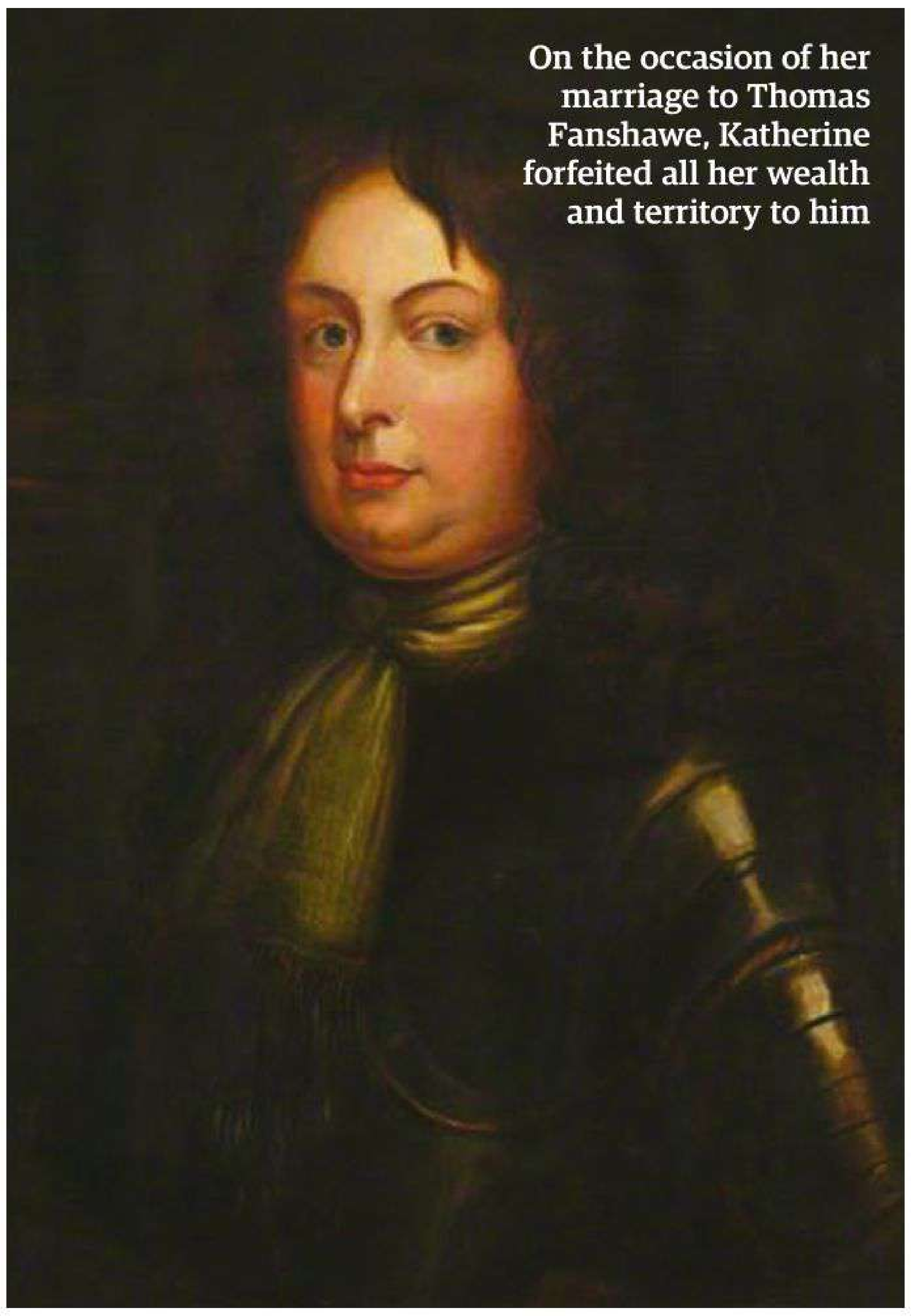
Here the legend gives way to fact once more. One thing we do know is that, regardless of his wife's behaviour, Thomas wasn't an angel either. He served a short sentence in the Tower of London for his involvement in a Presbyterian uprising, but was released when the Protectorate fell. When Charles II rode triumphant into London in February 1660, Katherine was there to see the king's restoration, but just a few months later, Mistress Katherine Ferrers died. The exact date and circumstances of her death remain tantalisingly unknown, keeping the fires of rumour burning. Katherine was just 26 years old and left no children. She was the last of the Ferrers line.

> Marie Fanshawe was buried in 1660, but the mother's identity is unrecorded. Did Katherine die in childbirth?

Yet there is an intriguing coda to this story. When workmen were carrying out renovations on Markyate Cell in the 19th century, they found a secret chamber in a wall. This was enough to bring the tale of the Wicked Lady back to life, but there's one major problem with this discovery: Katherine never lived at Markyate Cell. On her marriage, the home became the property of Katherine's husband and was let out to tenants, meaning that she couldn't have used it as a base of operations, even if she had wanted to. In addition, many of the robberies attributed to her were geographically scattered, and the distance between the supposed place in which she was shot and her rumoured headquarters would have been a long ride for even a healthy woman, let alone one sporting a gunshot. Add to all of this the point that Katherine wasn't accused of anything at all until long after her death, and we are left with the distinct possibility that Katherine Ferrers wasn't a terribly wicked lady at all.

Whatever the truth in the tale of Katherine Ferrers, the Wicked Lady of legend, she occupies a unique place in England's criminal history. Branded a notorious highwaywoman, accused of consorting with thieves and blamed for all manner of crimes, she has become infamous without any particular evidence to support the accusations. Yet something about the royalist heiress – wronged, neglected and left without the inheritance that should have been hers – captured the affection of the public. Whether she was truly a criminal shall never be known, but one thing is certain: nearly four centuries after the death of Katherine Ferrers, the so-called Wicked Lady remains notorious.


Katherine rented rooms in London when Charles II returned victorious. Months later, she was dead


On the occasion of her marriage to Thomas Fanshawe, Katherine forfeited all her wealth and territory to him

Legend has it that Katherine Ferrers turned to a life of crime after meeting highwayman Ralph Chaplin

Jesse James

The Robin Hood of Missouri, or a self-mythologising murderer and thief?

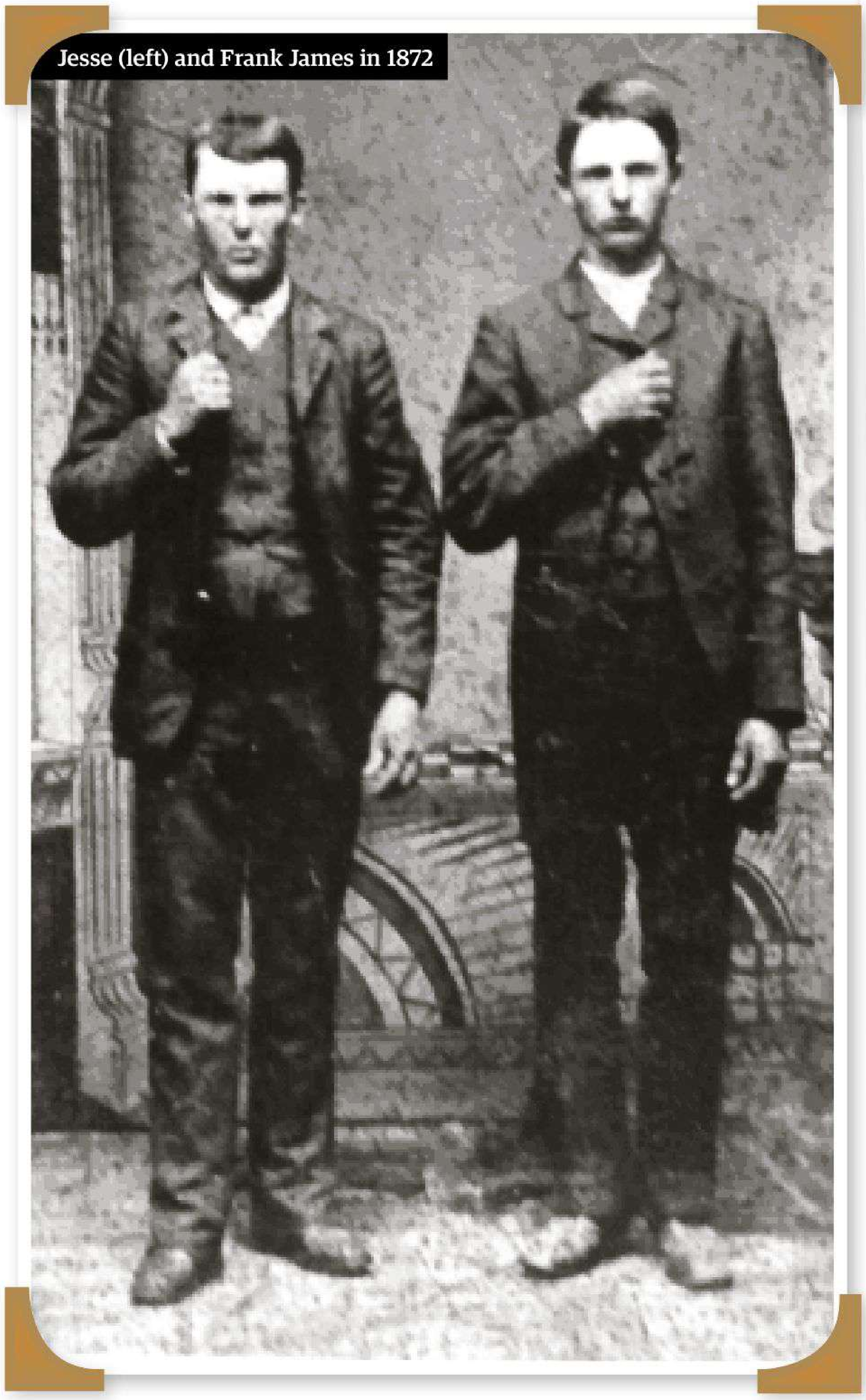
Jesse James was a celebrity in his lifetime, and he remains an icon of the Wild West and a hero of the Confederate South. Born in Clay County, Missouri, in 1847, James was the middle of three children. His mother Zerelda had attended Catholic school in Kentucky, and his father, Robert, was a prosperous, slave-holding farmer and evangelical preacher. When Jesse was three, his father, having gone West to save souls in the Gold Rush, died. Zerelda married twice in the next five years, giving Jesse four half-siblings.

Through the 1850s, the USA slid towards civil war. Missouri was on the border between the North and the South, and the front line cut across its society. Clay County, with more slaveholders and more slaves than average, was known as ‘Little Dixie’. When the Civil War began in 1861, Jesse’s elder brother Frank joined the Confederate Army.

Missouri became a battleground for militias, the ‘Bushwhackers’ for the Confederacy, the ‘Jayhawkers’ for the Union. Both groups committed atrocities. The Bushwhackers murdered Unionist sympathisers and executed Unionist prisoners, sometimes scalping the corpses. The Jayhawkers burned farms, executed Confederate sympathisers and even expelled them from Missouri. In 1863, after Frank James had joined the Bushwhackers, a Jayhawker militia raided his family’s farm. The Unionists tortured Jesse’s stepfather, and may have flogged 15-year-old Jesse too. Frank escaped and joined Quantrill’s Raiders, a notorious guerrilla cavalry unit led by William C Quantrill. Frank probably took part in the massacre by Quantrill’s Raiders of more than 200 men and boys at the Jayhawker stronghold of Lawrence, Kansas, in August 1863.

Frank returned home in the summer of 1864, and recruited his younger brother. Soon, they were riding with another notorious Bushwhacker leader, William ‘Bloody Bill’ Anderson. Jesse was shot in the chest within weeks. He recovered in time to take part in the Centralia Massacre. In September 1864, Anderson’s men, drunk on whiskey, raided Centralia, Missouri, and captured a train. They ordered the 23 Union soldiers on the train to strip, then shot, maimed and scalped them all. Pursued by a Jayhawker militia, the next day Anderson’s men ambushed and slaughtered more than 100 men.

When the Union authorities expelled Jesse and Frank’s family from Clay County, and after Anderson’s death a few weeks later, the brothers



Jesse (left) and Frank James in 1872

Bob, Jim and Cole Younger, sitting left to right with their sister Henrietta

split. Frank went into Kentucky with Quantrill, and Jesse into Texas with Anderson's lieutenant, Archie Clement. In a fight with a Union patrol near Lexington, Jesse survived a second chest wound. Recovering at his uncle's house in nearby Harlem, he fell in love with his first cousin, Zerelda Mimms.

The war ended in 1865, but Jesse, like many Confederate veterans, failed to adjust to the peace. The society he'd known was in ruins, and the Republican government was set upon Reconstruction, the rebuilding of Southern society. The Bushwhackers carried on their war. In 1866, Clement's gang conducted the USA's first armed bank robbery, against a bank owned by Republican ex-Jayhawkers. A government militia killed Clement soon afterwards, but his gang carried on robbing banks, usually killing civilians in the process.

In 1869, raiding a bank in Gallatin, Missouri, Jesse murdered a cashier; he had mistaken him for the killer of 'Bloody Bill' Anderson. The killing, and the brothers' daring escape from the posse that chased them out of town, made Jesse the most famous of the ex-guerrilla 'outlaws'.

Jesse liked his fame. He formed an alliance with another ex-Confederate cavalryman, John Edwards, the editor of the *Kansas City Times*, who published letters in which James claimed his innocence, defended the Confederacy and denounced the Republicans. Edwards, who campaigned to undo Reconstruction by bringing ex-Confederates to office in Missouri, praised James for remaining true to old Dixie. The legend of Jesse James was born.

Meanwhile, the James brothers teamed up with the Younger brothers, four ex-Bushwhackers from Missouri. For the next six years, the gang ranged across Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri and Louisiana, robbing banks, trains and stagecoaches. Numerous civilians were killed along the way, but the gang also acquired a reputation for chivalry. Not all of this was the work of John Edwards of the *Kansas City Times*.

In 1872, after a young girl had been shot in crossfire during a bank robbery at Columbia, Kentucky, Jesse wrote to the *Kansas City Times* denying that his men had shot her, even though by clearing his name so publicly, he incriminated the Younger Brothers in the robbery. In January 1874, during a stagecoach robbery in Arkansas, the gang returned a watch to its owner when they discovered that he was a Confederate veteran. They told him that the North had driven them to crime. Two weeks later, when the gang robbed a train at Gads Hill, Missouri, they checked the passengers' hands so as to not steal from any manual labourers.

By now, the Pinkerton Detective Agency was on their trail. In January 1875, following the murder of several Pinkerton agents, a group of Pinkerton detectives firebombed the James family farm. Jesse's mother lost her right arm, and Jesse's nine-year-old half-brother Archie was killed.

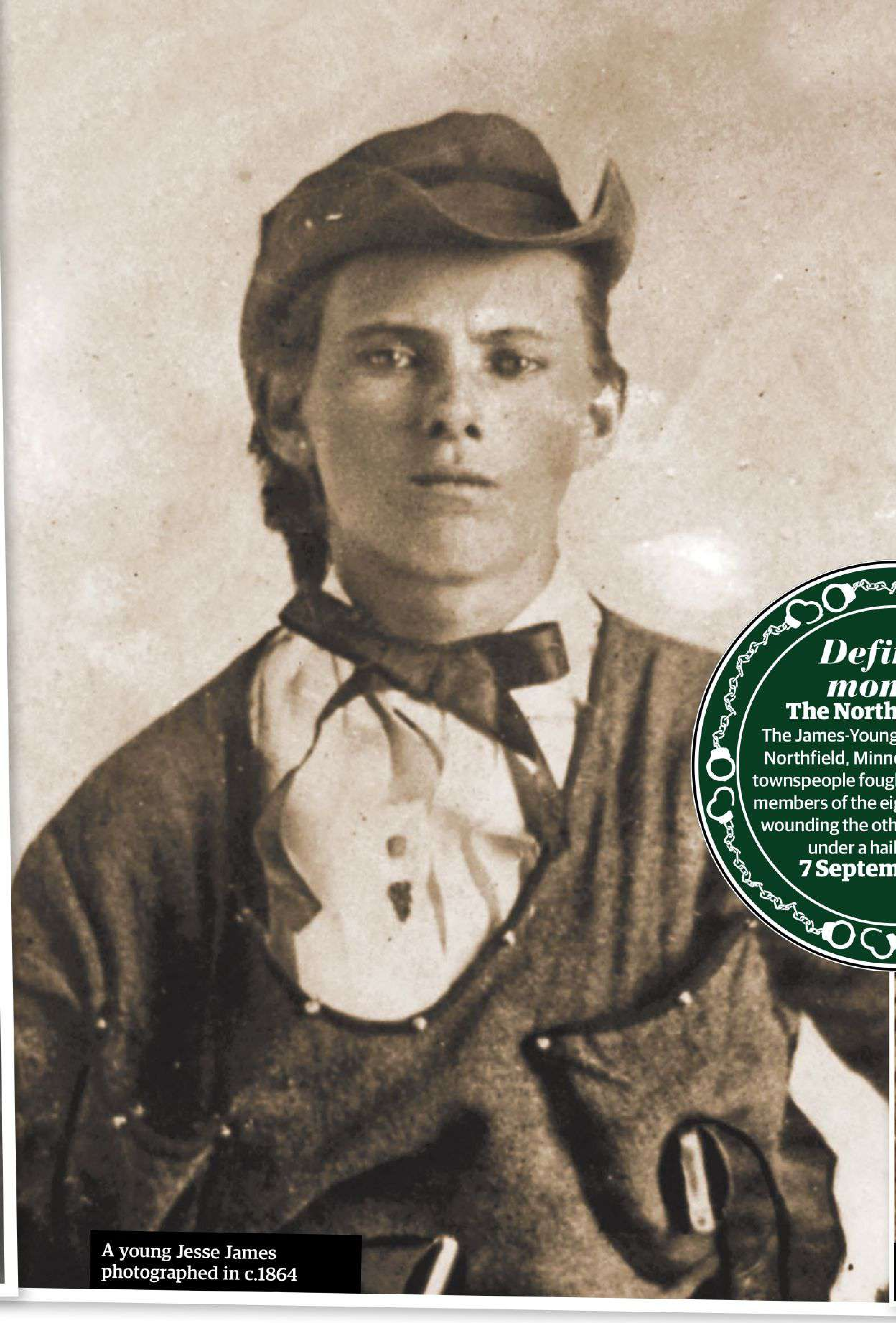
The gang's luck ran out on 7 September 1876, when it raided the First National Bank at Northfield, Minnesota. While Frank James, Bob Younger and an accomplice named Charlie Pitts held up the bank, Jesse James and four other men rode up and down the street, firing their guns in the air to keep people indoors. But the residents broke out their own

Defining moment

Pinkerton Agency firebombs family farm

In the dead of night, detectives threw an incendiary into the farmhouse. Jesse's nine-year-old half-brother was killed, and his mother Zerelda lost her right arm.

25 January 1875



A young Jesse James photographed in c.1864

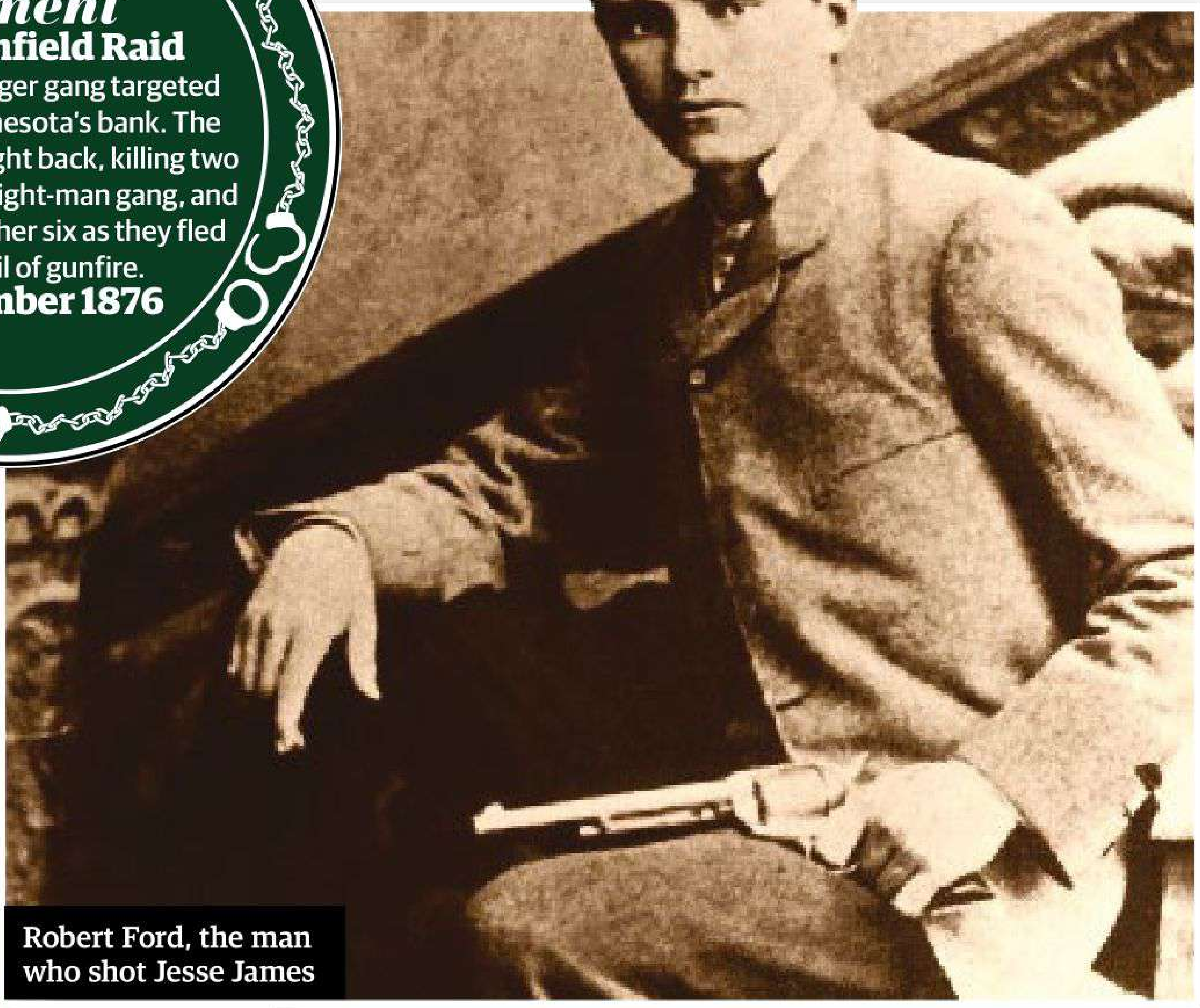
The gun that shot Jesse James was a Smith & Wesson Model 3

Defining moment

The Northfield Raid

The James-Younger gang targeted Northfield, Minnesota's bank. The townspeople fought back, killing two members of the eight-man gang, and wounding the other six as they fled under a hail of gunfire.

7 September 1876



Robert Ford, the man who shot Jesse James

> "When the gang robbed a train at Gads Hill, Missouri, they checked the passengers' hands so as to not steal from any manual labourers"

weapons. Two of the gang were killed. Cole Younger was hit in the leg, Bob Younger in the arm, and Jim Younger in the face. The survivors escaped with only a few bags of nickels, and all had been wounded – Jesse in the leg – as they fled.

Chased by hundreds of militiamen, the gang split up. Two weeks later, the Youngers and Charlie Pitts were captured after a gunfight near La Salle, Minnesota. Tried, they received life sentences. Frank and Jesse escaped to a farm in Nashville, Tennessee. They lived quietly for the next three years. In early 1879, Jesse recruited a new gang and returned to crime. After a spree of train robberies, Missouri's new governor Thomas T Crittenden persuaded his officials and the railroad executives to offer a large reward for James's capture. But no one turned the gang in: sympathy ran high among ex-Confederates.

Instead, James was murdered in his own home by one of his own men, a new recruit named Robert Ford. With his brother Charley, Robert Ford approached Governor Crittenden and agreed to solve the problem of Jesse James in return for a reward of $5,000. Just after breakfast on 3 April 1882, as an unarmed James climbed onto a chair in his living room to wipe dust from a picture, Robert Ford shot him in the back of the head at point-blank range.

In a single day, the Ford brothers surrendered, were indicted for murder, sentenced to death and then pardoned. The cowardly nature of James's killing, and the impression that Missouri's governor had conspired James's assassination, further burnished the legend of Jesse James. Charley Ford, a morphine addict, committed suicide the following year.

In June 1892, a man named Edward O'Kelley served the verdict of the court of public opinion on Robert Ford – with both barrels of a shotgun. After murdering James, Ford had opened a saloon in Creede, Colorado. O'Kelley was sentenced to life in prison, but was pardoned in 1902 after a petition signed by thousands.

Surprisingly, several of the key members of the James-Younger gang survived – and played a part in maintaining the legend of Jesse James. Frank James surrendered in October 1882 in Missouri, apparently on the condition that he would not be extradited to Northfield, Minnesota. Frank was tried for two robberies in Missouri, but convicted of neither.

The Younger brothers served time in a Minnesota prison, but never assisted the prosecution of Frank James. Bob Younger died of tuberculosis in jail, but in 1901, Cole and Jim Younger were paroled on the condition they remained in Minnesota. Jim Younger shot himself in 1902. A year later, Cole Younger was pardoned on condition that he never return to Minnesota.

This was a different age: the Gilded Age of fantastic fortunes and populist politicians. Jesse James was remembered as a Robin Hood, an ordinary man who had stood up against powerful corporations, rather than the killer who had donned a Ku Klux Klan hood – and not just as a disguise. Jesse James robbed the rich – the banks and the railroads – but without feeding the poor. If he was loyal to his family and friends, he was also a habitual thief and killer.

© Alamy

Butch Cassidy

His exploits with the Wild Bunch captured the imagination of the public and even his death became the stuff of legends. Is Butch Cassidy the most infamous figure of the Wild West?

Say the name Butch Cassidy and it's hard to not immediately think of the Sundance Kid and the 1969 film. Its story of two wisecracking buddies is so ingrained in culture as to be taken as fact. But it isn't fact. For a start, Cassidy and Sundance were not best friends. They did flee to Argentina together, but that was more opportunity than choice. But even if the film didn't nail it in terms of accuracy, that is not to say that Butch Cassidy's life wasn't full of thrills, adventure and intrigue.

Born Robert Leroy Parker on 13 April 1866, in Utah, Cassidy's parents were staunch Mormons. His dad, Maximillian Parker, was 12 when he arrived with his family in Salt Lake City in 1856, and they became Mormon pioneers. Cassidy's childhood was spent on his family's ranch, but perhaps sensing that the Mormon life was not for him, he left home during his early teens. He supported himself by working on various ranches, and it was while at a dairy farm that he started to get drawn into the criminal world.

Mike Cassidy (real name John Tolliver McClammy) was a cowboy and rustler and soon-to-be mentor and friend of the young Parker. In fact, it's said that Robert dropped his Parker surname in favour of Cassidy in honour of his friend, adding it to his nickname of Butch. It is also said that the name change was due to a desire to not disrespect his family, as at the time he had a feeling his path would take a significant diversion from the Mormon lifestyle he had been brought up to believe in.

For a while Butch continued to move between ranches, living the life of a cowboy in Wyoming and Montana until he gravitated to Telluride, Colorado, in 1887. After striking up a friendship with race horse owner Matt Warner some time earlier, Cassidy robbed his first bank.

It was the 24 June, 1889, and Cassidy, Warner and the two McCarty brothers helped themselves to about $21,000 from the San Miguel Valley Bank. The crew didn't hang around for long, making their way to the Robbers Roost, an area of rough terrain in southeast Utah. The natural crags and canyons made this a popular hideout for outlaws, and in fact it was while Cassidy and his best friend Elzy Lay were lying low there that they formed the Wild Bunch.

When the heat had died down, Cassidy made his way to Wyoming, where he bought a ranch on the outskirts of Dubois. Although it's possible he did this in an attempt to earn an honest living, the fact he never actually made any money from it and that the location was just over from another outlaw hangout – the Hole in the Wall – suggests the ranch was a front for nefarious activities. There's also the fact he was arrested in 1894 for stealing horses and possibly running a protection racket among ranchers.

Cassidy served 18 months of a two-year sentence at the Wyoming State Prison, where upon his release in 1896 he was pardoned by Governor William Alford Richards. While some may have taken the pardon as an opportunity to turn their life around and walk the straight and narrow, it did absolutely nothing

Defining moment

Returning to jail

Cassidy is famous for his honesty. One night before he was due to go to jail, he asked to have the night as a free man, saying he'd return the next day. The authorities agreed and, sure enough, Cassidy returned the next morning.

1894

Butch Cassidy took great pride in the fact he had never had to take a life in his criminal career to quash Cassidy's criminal tendencies. After his release from jail, Cassidy went on to form the Wild Bunch and forever seal his place in the Wild West hall of fame.

Perhaps fittingly for a bunch of thieves, the gang's name was literally taken from the Doolin-Dalton Gang (also known as the Wild Bunch) and consisted of a rag-tag crew of criminals. In addition to Cassidy and his best friend, William Ellsworth 'Elzy' Lay, the core gang consisted of Harvey 'Kid Curry' Logan, Ben Kilpatrick, Harry Tracy, Will 'News' Carver, Laura Bullion and George 'Flat Nose' Curry.

Other members would come and go, including Harry Alonzo Longabaugh (The Sundance Kid), who Cassidy recruited not long after leaving jail. But it was this core group who went on to perform the longest stretch of successful train and bank robberies in American history.

Defining moment

Recruiting the Sundance Kid

By inviting the Sundance Kid to join the Wild Bunch, Cassidy set in motion a relationship that would secure his place in Wild West history.

1894

They wasted no time. Cassidy, Lay, Logan and Bob Meeks targeted the bank in Montpelier, Idaho on 13 August 1896, just a few months after his release from prison. This first robbery set off a chain of others, taking the gang across South Dakota, Wyoming, Nevada and New Mexico. Their hauls would range from just a few thousand to $70,000 from a train outside Folsom, New Mexico.

Rather than encourage the ire of law-abiding citizens, the public were enamoured with their adventures, almost rooting for them to do well. Some of the reason for that could be because Cassidy had a bit of a Robin Hood persona, often sharing his loot with local people who were struggling to get by.

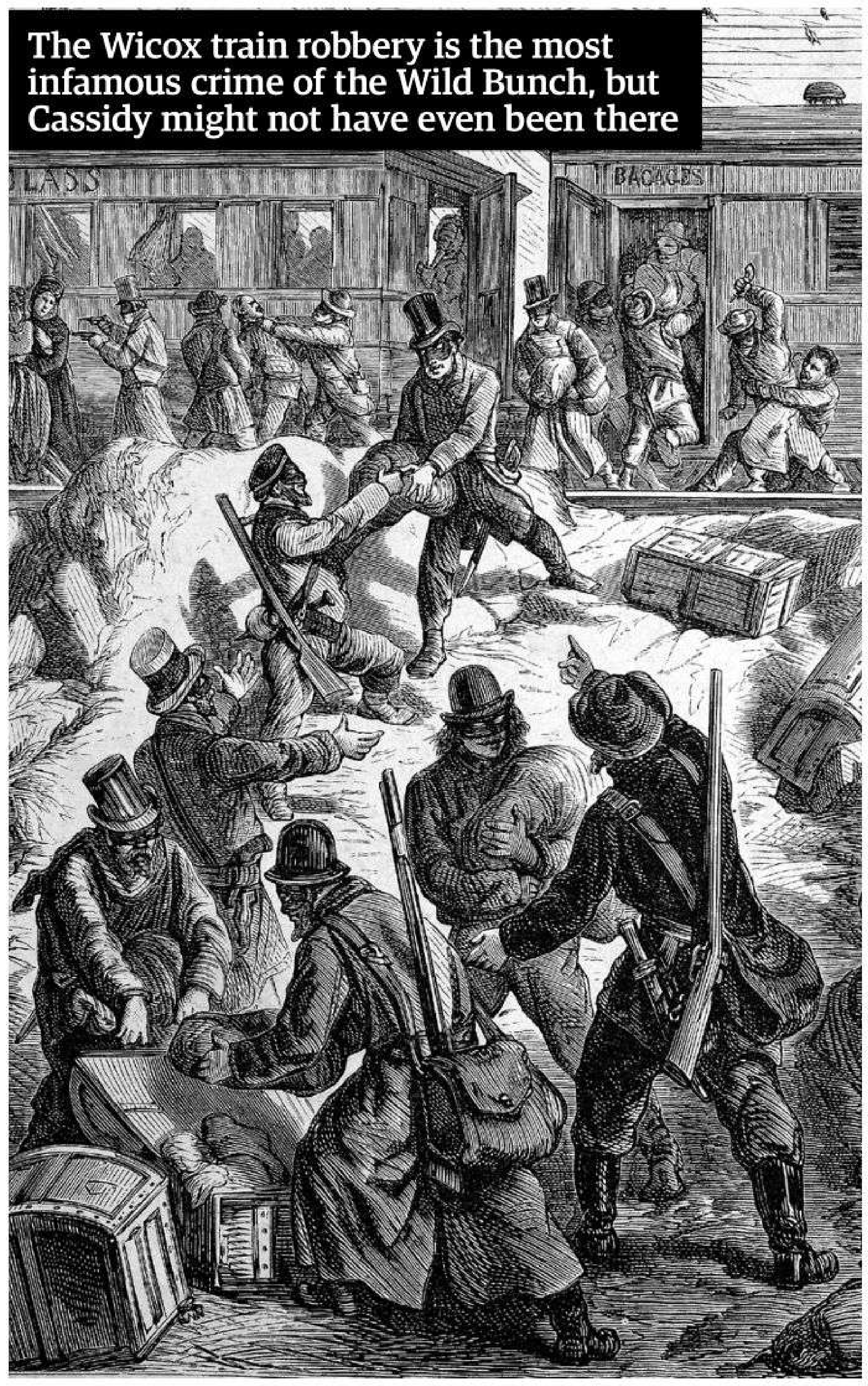
Although seen as the leader of the gang, Cassidy was always a little bit removed from his criminal colleagues. For a start, he took great pride in the fact he had never killed anyone in his criminal career. If being chased, his preferred defence was to shoot the horse carrying the person chasing him. However, this refusal to shed human blood did not extend to his criminal comrades, many of whom had no qualms about killing people – usually officers of the law – during close pursuits.

Wilcox, Wyoming, became the location of the most famous and most destructive Wild Bunch robbery. On 2 June 1899, the gang robbed a Union Pacific Overland Flyer passenger train. There was a shootout with the law following the robbery, which saw Kid Curry and George Curry kill Sheriff Joe Hazen. The gang got away with $30,000.

For Cassidy, the robbery had serious ramifications. The train was carrying gold to pay troops in the Spanish-American War, and by robbing it he was deemed to have committed an act of terrorism. From that robbery onwards, Cassidy and the Wild Bunch were targeted as national terrorists, with a reward of $18,000 if caught, dead or alive. Even though it's doubtful Cassidy robbed the train – one of the terms of his 1896 pardon was to not commit a crime in Wyoming, and Cassidy was a man of his word – it put the gang firmly in the sights of local law enforcement and the infamous Pinkerton Detective Agency. Yet still they robbed. In fact, just a few weeks later on 11 July, the Bunch robbed a Colorado and Southern Railroad train near Folsom, New Mexico. Another shootout with law enforcement ensued, and this time Cassidy's best friend, Elzy Lay, killed sheriffs Edward Far and Henry Love. Lay was eventually caught and convicted for his crimes, sentenced to life imprisonment for the double murders.

Things then went from bad to worse. During 1900 and 1901, various members of the Wild Bunch were either shot or captured. It was too much for Cassidy. He had gone from being seen as a cowboy Robin Hood to feeling suffocated by the law, so he fled to New York City with Sundance and his girlfriend, Etta Place, and then on to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in February 1901. They bought a ranch and settled down for a few years. But the peace was not to last.

The Pinkerton Detective Agency had been hired by Union Pacific after the Wilcox robbery to hunt down Cassidy, and it was very good at its job. Agent Frank Dimaio had learnt of Cassidy's location, and everything was in place to make an arrest. However, a local sheriff who had become friends with Cassidy tipped the trio off, so in May 1905 they made their escape north, ending up in Chile. Then for some reason they returned to Argentina, and not only did they return, they robbed a bank. Now being pursued for certain, they returned to Chile once again.

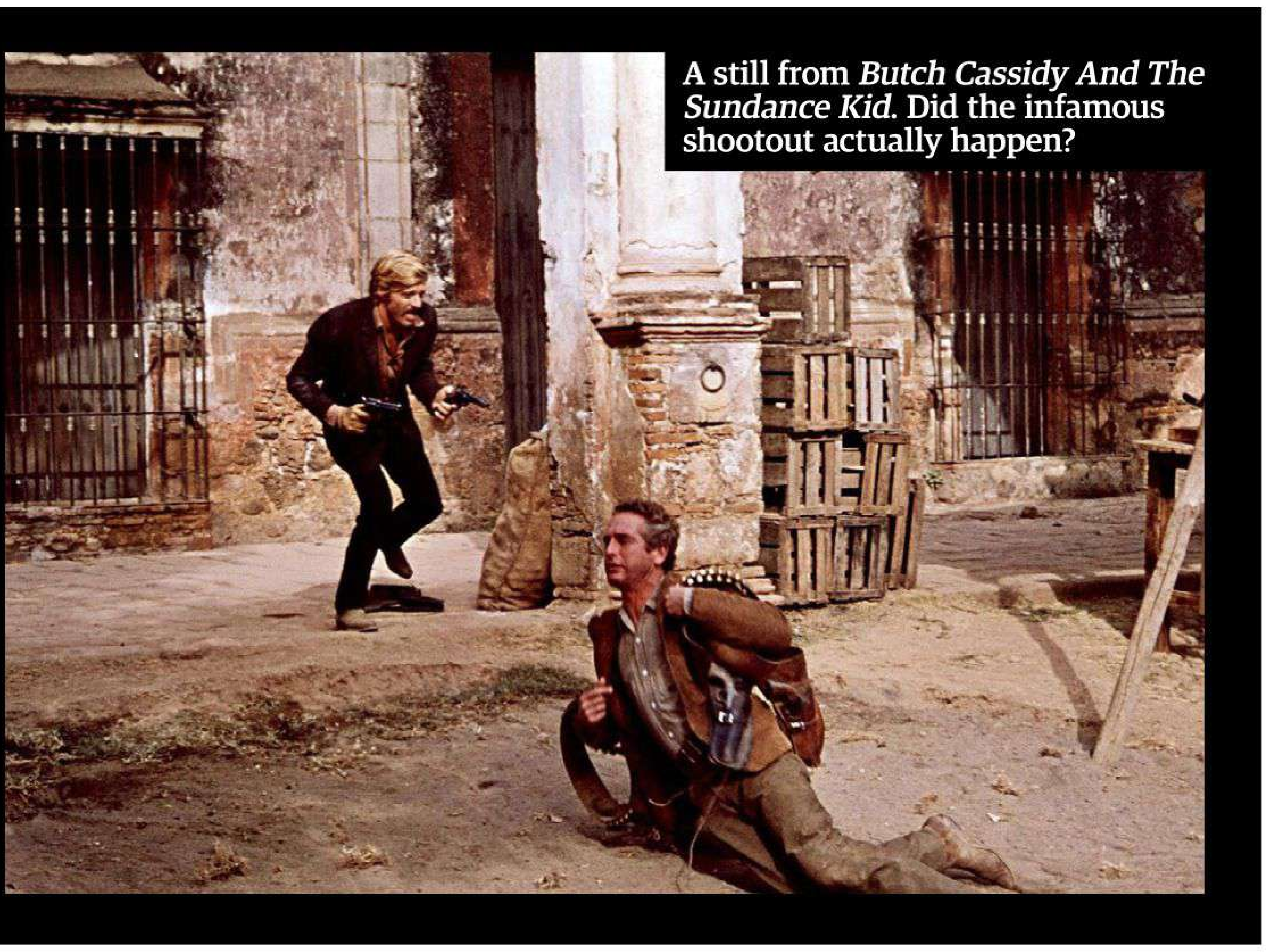

The Wicox train robbery is the most infamous crime of the Wild Bunch, but Cassidy might not have even been there

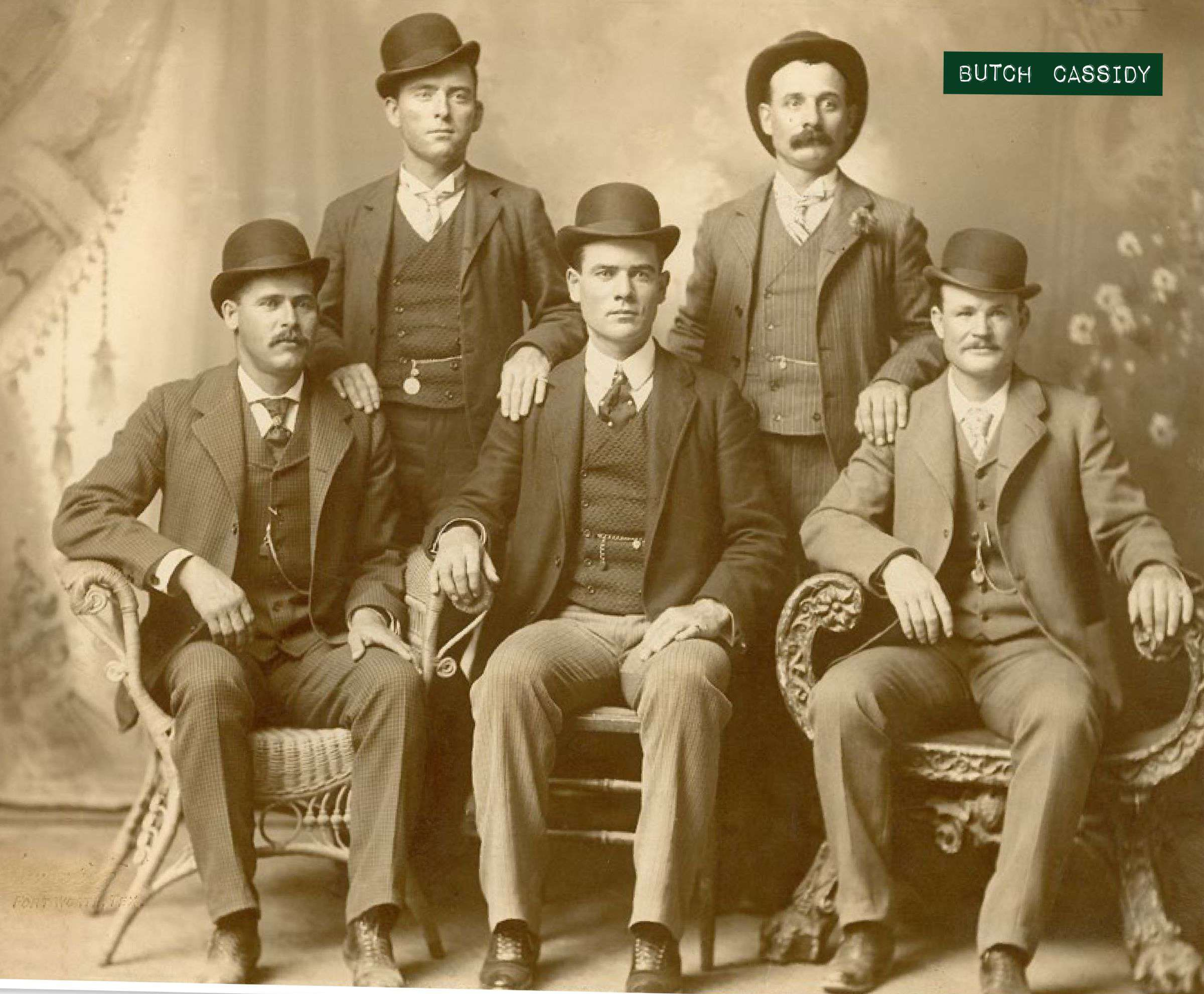
When did Cassidy actually die?

One of the most memorable scenes from the *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* film is the great shootout at the end, with both going down in a blaze of glory. But there have been many theories that Cassidy did not die in Bolivia, that he instead returned to America to live out the rest of his days in peace.

One of the most interesting theories came from a 1978 TV series called In Search Of…. It focused on an argument made by Wild West historian Charles Kelly in his 1938 book *The Outlaw Trail: A History of Butch Cassidy And His Wild Bunch.* In it Kelly states that if Cassidy was alive he would have visited his father, and because he didn't do so he must have been dead.

In the episode, residents of Baggs, Wyoming, all state that Cassidy visited during 1924. There was also an interview with Cassidy's sister, Lula Parker Betenson, who says that not only did he visit his father, but he went on to live out his life in Washington. Betenson's 1975 book, *Butch Cassidy, My Brother,* also states that Cassidy told her he had got a friend to say one of the bodies in Bolivia was his so he could live a life free of pursuit. And before you dismiss the theory as fanciful, remember that there is no actual evidence either way!


A still from *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid.* Did the infamous shootout actually happen?


FORT WORTH, TEX.

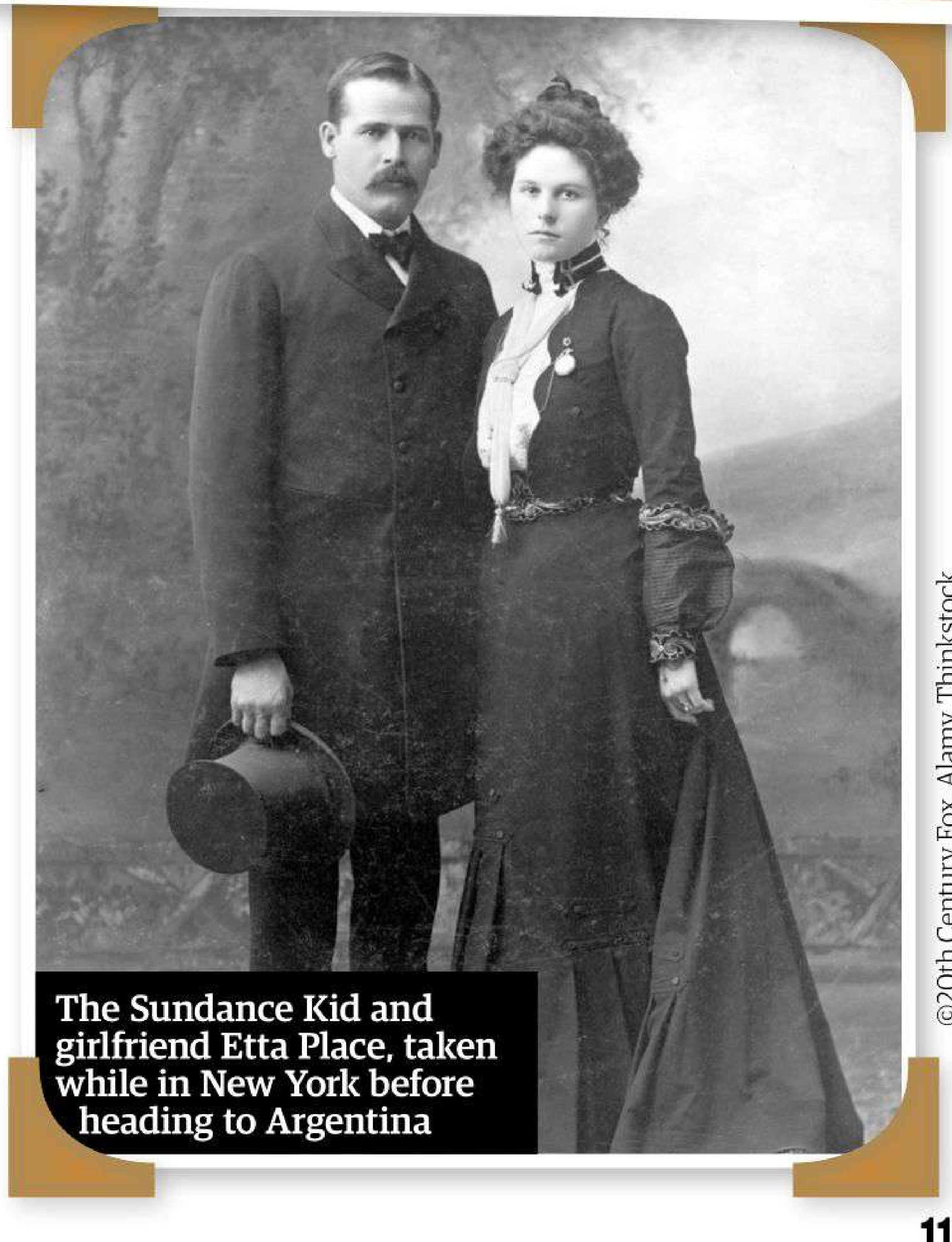
But it was too much for Etta Place. Sundance took her back to San Francisco while Cassidy took an alias of James 'Santiago' Maxwell and worked at the Concordia Tin Mine. Sundance eventually joined him there. In 1907, the pair moved to Santa Cruz, apparently to lead the life of ranchers. But somehow it all went wrong.

On 3 November 1908, in Bolivia, a courier for the Aramavo Franke and Cia Silver Mine was transporting his company's payroll, worth around 15,000 Bolivian pesos. Two masked Americans attacked and robbed him, before lodging in a small boarding house nearby. But the owner was suspicious. After alerting a nearby telegraph officer, on the night of 6 November, soldiers, the police chief, the local mayor and his officials all surrounded the boarding house, waiting to arrest the robbers. Things didn't quite go to plan. The robbers started to shoot, killing one soldier and wounding another. The gunfire was returned and before long an all-out gunfight erupted. Then there was a scream, a shot and then another shot. Silence followed.

The authorities entered the boarding house the next morning and found two dead bodies. One had a bullet would in the forehead, while the other had one in the temple, in addition to various bullet wounds in the arms and legs. The police report assumed that one robber had shot his partner to spare him further agony before then killing himself.

The report also concluded that the two bodies were the men who had robbed the courier, but there were no other forms of identification, although it was assumed that the bodies belonged to Cassidy and Sundance. They were buried in a small cemetery in unmarked graves. It was an inauspicious end to an action-packed era of looting and shooting, and perhaps not one that suited the legend of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

However, death was by no means the end for this notorious duo. While the eponymous 1969 film is the most widely recognised tribute to them, its sequel, *Butch And Sundance: The Early Days*, released in 1979, is just one more example of many media portrayals of their famous escapades.


The Sundance Kid and girlfriend Etta Place, taken while in New York before heading to Argentina

©20th Century Fox, Alamy, Thinkstock

Public Enemies America's Most Wanted

The Crime Wave made celebrities of America's outlaws. They robbed, kidnapped and killed their way across America, lived fast and died young

The early 1930s brought chaos and crisis to America. 1929's Wall Street Crash created the Depression. Prohibition was intended to inaugurate a new, clean-living era. Instead it handed America's alcohol business entirely to gangsters. Racketeers made millions while thousands died from toxic home-made booze. Gangsters and citizens alike died in droves as rival crime-lords battled for supremacy.

The Roaring Twenties also created a different breed of gangster. Racketeers like Al Capone concentrated on gambling, bootlegging, extortion, drugs and prostitution. The 'yeggs' or 'yeggmen' ripped through State after State robbing, kidnapping and killing almost at will. An Indiana bank one morning, an Illinois kidnapping that afternoon. The authorities seemed powerless to stop them.

Some gangsters like Sam 'Samoots' Amatuna, really did carry Tommy guns in violin cases

Some, like Bonnie and Clyde, were responding to poverty and desperation. For John Dillinger it was a profession. For sadists like Lester Gillis, aka 'Baby Face' Nelson, it was a lucrative way to punish a society they despised. Almost all their lives were short, their ends seldom merry. Most would end their days in prison or a hail of lead.

The Old West outlaws had been content with six-shooters, Winchester rifles, shotguns and horses. Yeggs, however, had much better tools. Revolvers were largely replaced by automatic pistols. The Winchester gave way to the Tommy gun and Browning Automatic Rifle. Bulletproof vests were fashionable and horses replaced by cars. Sawn-off shotguns, however, remained popular.

America had never seen such outlaws. Never again would they wreak such havoc and bring so much slaughter.

The Crime Wave wasn't an isolated event, nor an event in its own right. The period between 1920 and 1935 could be considered the Golden Age of lawlessness and the Crime Wave merely its crescendo.

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It wasn't the most violent period of history, merely the best-publicised. The new breed included Bonnie and Clyde, John Dillinger, the Barker-Karpis Gang, Charles 'Pretty Boy' Floyd and 'Baby Face' Nelson.

Some, like Ma Barker and Bonnie and Clyde, were portrayed as being criminal masterminds they definitely weren't. Others, like John Dillinger, were natural criminals wanting easy money and lasting fame. Born without money or connections they were people for whom the American Dream would remain exactly that without drastic action.

While handing America's booze business to the underworld, Prohibition did something far worse. It inspired in many Americans a disrespect for the law. Some almost considered it their duty to drink illegally. Prohibition recast gangsters, especially bootleggers, from public enemies to public servants.

'Baby Face' Nelson killed three FBI agents, still the record number killed by a single felon

Economic meltdown left millions destitute. As it worsened banks foreclosed loans, bankrupted businesses and repossessed homes. Many people saw bankers as natural enemies and outlaws as heroes. If nothing else, people like Dillinger were seen as honest crooks unlike the bankers they robbed. That and their media-friendly exploits entranced a population desperately wanting entertainment.

Dillinger's mentor Harry Pierpont, when tried for murder, bluntly told the prosecutor, "I'm not like some bank robbers, I didn't get myself elected President of the bank first." Millions of Americans felt the same. Some, broke and desperate, decided to act.

Dillinger was one of them. He bore a grudge against the law after mugging a shopkeeper in 1924. Offered leniency by the judge in return for a guilty plea, Dillinger drew between nine and 20 years. Convinced the law were out to get him, he used his time learning a more lucrative craft – armed robbery.

Paroled from Indiana State Penitentiary in May 1933, Dillinger had learned from some of the toughest yeggs around. Harry Pierpont, Ed Shouse, Russell Clark, Walter Dietrich and Charles Makley were all seasoned pros. Fellow alumni Homer van Meter joined them later. In return for their joining the first Dillinger Gang, Dillinger arranged their escape. Robberies provided the money and guns were smuggled into the prison. On 26 September 1933 ten inmates escaped, the first Dillinger Gang was ready to go.

Dillinger, however, had been arrested the previous day. Springing him in Lima, Ohio on 12 October, Pierpont murdered Sheriff Jess Sarber. After robberies in Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana and Dillinger's first murder (Patrolman William O'Malley), the gang fled for Florida, then Arizona. It proved a bad idea.

In Tucson the gang were recognised and, in January 1934, arrested. Dillinger was extradited to Indiana's 'escape-proof' Crown Point jail for murdering O'Malley. Pierpont, Clark and Makley went to Ohio for murdering Sheriff Sarber. Both States had the electric chair and fully intended using it.

Dillinger didn't stay long. A smuggled pistol and sheer bravado saw him escape on 3 March. Stealing Sheriff Lillian Holley's car he headed for Chicago. It proved a fatal mistake. No matter what Dillinger did the FBI couldn't intervene until he committed a Federal crime, much to their frustration. Driving a stolen car across a State line invited the G-Men to enter the fray. Hoover immediately put a $15,000 bounty and shoot-to-kill order on Dillinger.

Dillinger soon formed a new gang. Homer van Meter, Tommy Carroll and John 'Red' Hamilton joined him. So too did the notorious 'Baby Face' Nelson. No gang member liked or trusted Nelson. They feared his hair-trigger temper and sadism and resented his ego. Van Meter had feuded with Pierpont, now he feuded with Nelson.

The 'G-Men' hunting him were mainly law graduates and accountants, mostly without any policing experience. It showed in their pursuit of Dillinger, which was at times farcical. That said, they were still learning their craft against seasoned career criminals and learning fast. Epic blunders like their chaotic raid on Wisconsin's Little Bohemia Lodge on 22 April 1934 were harsh lessons, but necessary.

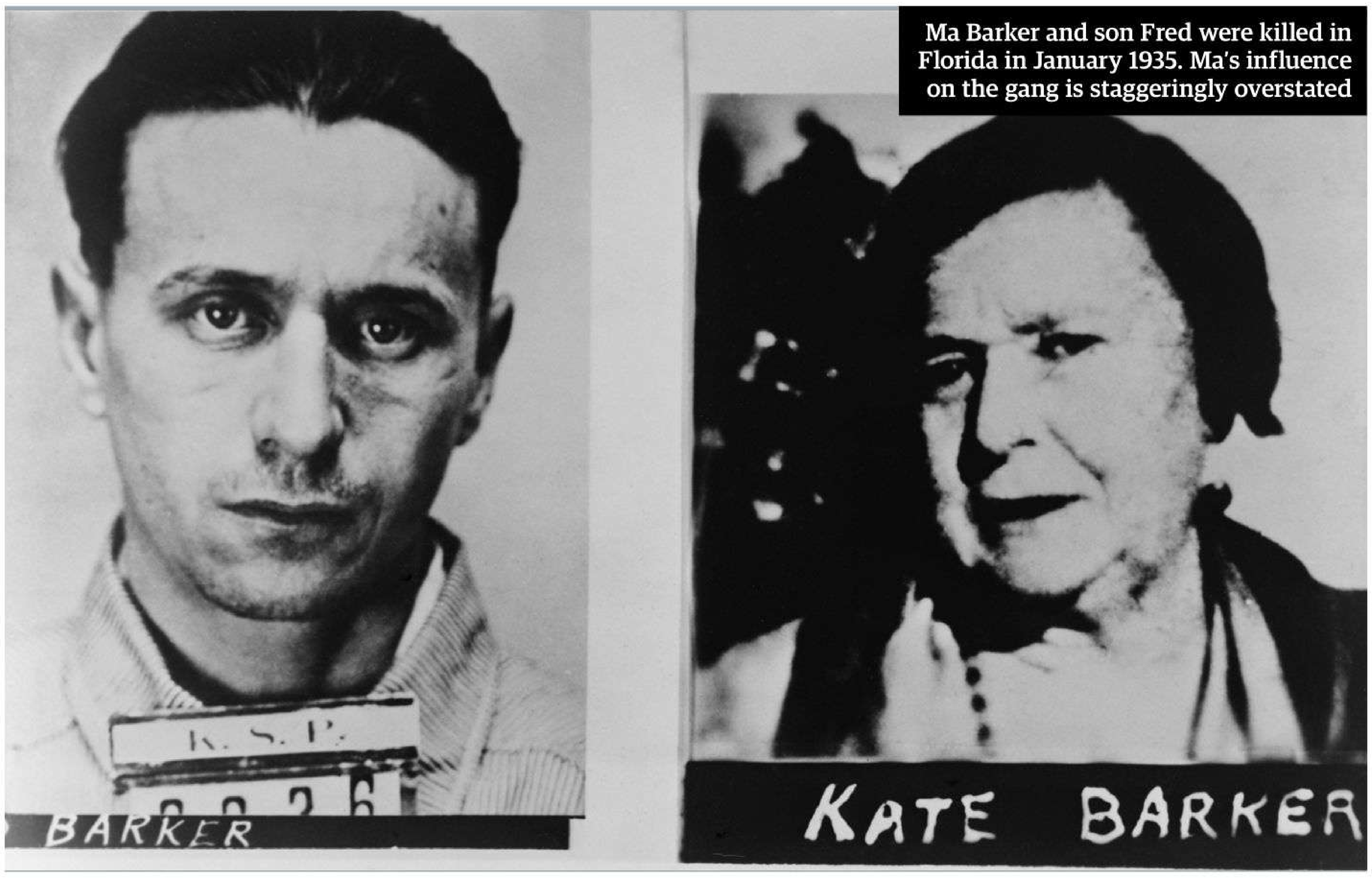
The gang escaped Little Bohemia, Nelson murdering one FBI agent and wounding another. Three innocent bystanders were shot. With every failure the Bureau were increasingly humiliated, but increasingly determined to destroy Dillinger. The tide of public opinion had also started turning.

Van Meter, Carroll and Hamilton fell in gunfights, one after another. At Mason City, Iowa in March 1934 bystanders attacked the gang and Dillinger was wounded. At South Bend, Indiana on 30 June bystanders again attacked them. Nelson went berserk even for him, spraying bullets in all directions.

Several bystanders were wounded and police officer Howard Wagner was shot dead. It was their last heist. The Dillinger Gang then scattered, never to reform. Dillinger himself had only weeks to live.

Dillinger's end came in Chicago, somewhere he visited regularly. Too regularly, as it turned out. Calling himself Jimmy Lawrence, Dillinger lived quietly. He was often at Chicago's cinemas and regularly visited local brothel madam Ana Cumpănaș (alias 'Anna Sage'). Cumpănaș knew his true identity and, facing deportation to Romania for brothel-keeping, had cut a deal with FBI inspector Sam Cowley. 22 July 1934 would be John Dillinger's last picture show.

Sage and employee Polly Hamilton visited the Biograph cinema with Dillinger to watch *Manhattan Melodrama*. A gangster movie starring Clark Gable, it ends with Gable's character facing the electric chair.



Ma Barker and son Fred were killed in Florida in January 1935. Ma's influence on the gang is staggeringly overstated

Arthur 'Dock' Barker joined Karpis at Alcatraz. He was shot dead attempting to escape the Rock in 1939

Acting on Sage's tip-off, FBI agents planned a simpler end for Dillinger. Sage wore an orange dress that evening for easy identification and, as the trio left the Biograph, agents moved in.

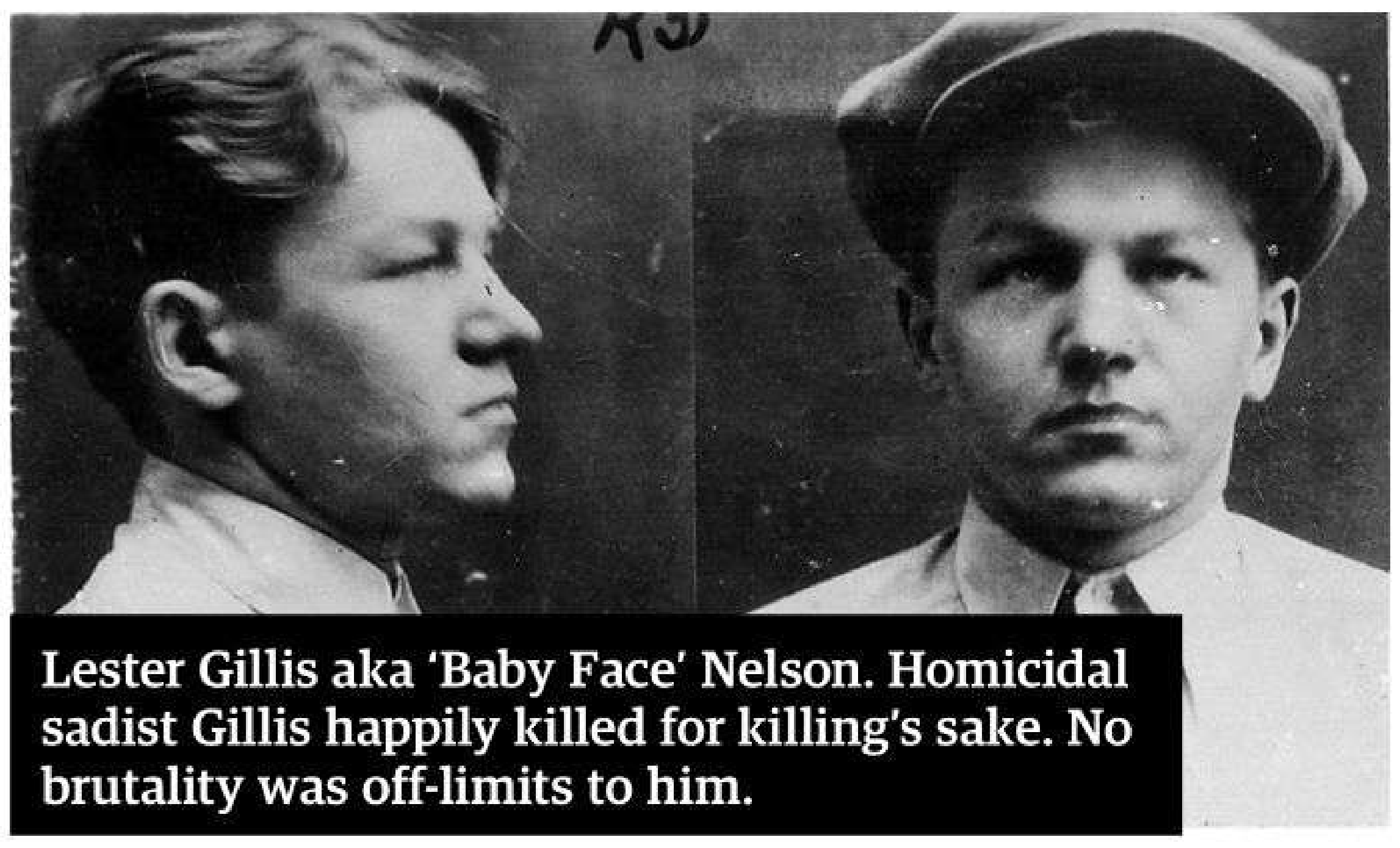
Dillinger, realising he'd been betrayed, ran. Agents Clarence Hurt and Charles Winstead immediately opened fire and Dillinger was shot dead. Amid the chaos bystanders, realising what they'd just witnessed, claimed souvenirs by dipping handkerchiefs in his blood. The notorious public enemy was gone.

Pierpont and Makley didn't last much longer. Condemned, they tried escaping the Death House at Ohio State Penitentiary in September 1934. Makley was shot dead and Pierpont crippled. He was carried to the electric chair on 17 October only days after his 32nd birthday. Nelson, whose violent nature guaranteed his early death, became Public Enemy Number One after Pretty Boy Floyd was killed by FBI agents on 20 October 1934. He reigned for only a month before, on 27 November, the FBI killed him too.

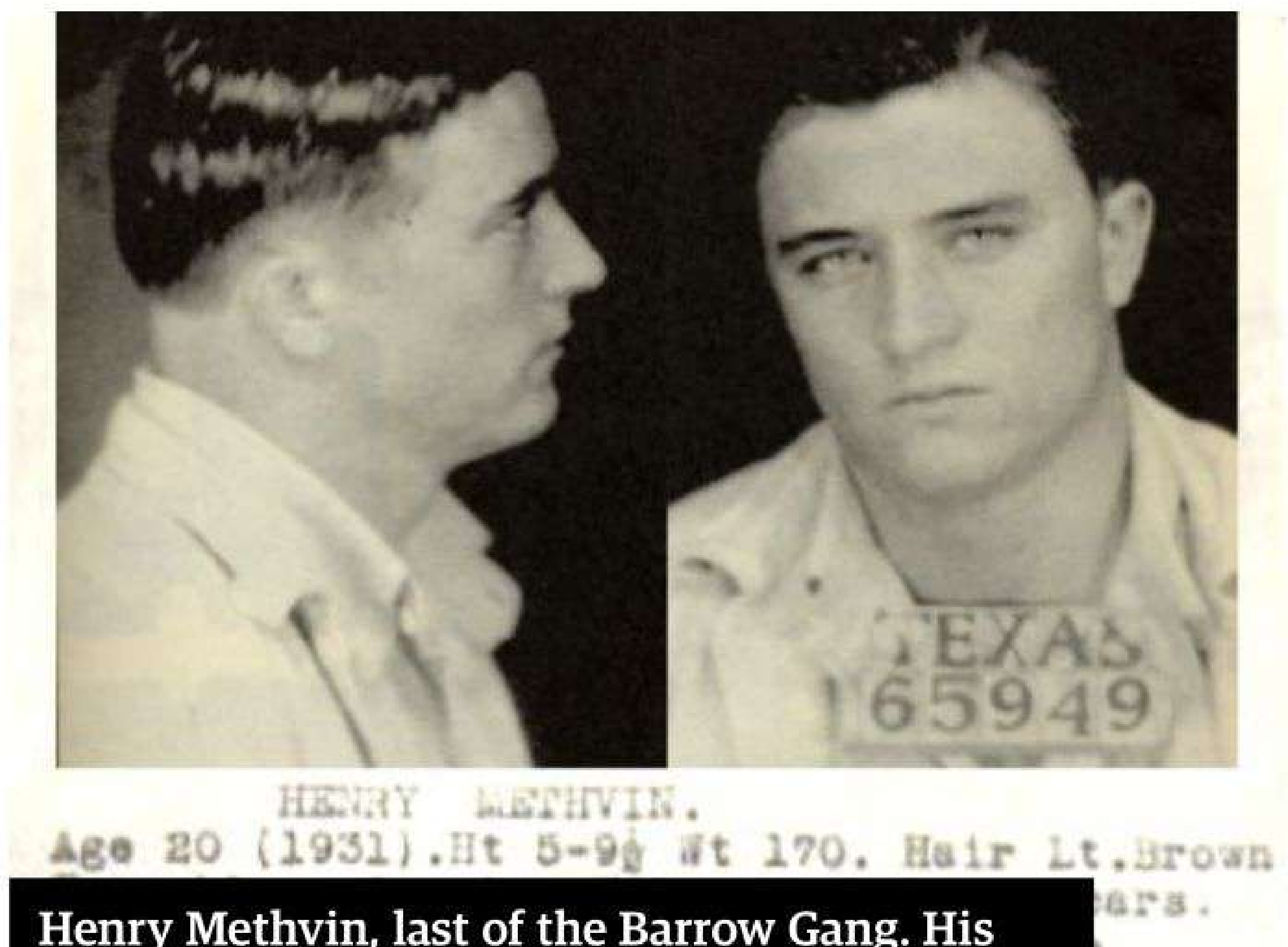
Dillinger was perhaps the most infamous public enemy, but only one of many. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow have also been immortalised. Dillinger was a professional, his crimes often well planned. Bonnie and Clyde, however, blazed a chaotic trail through several states. They earned celebrity and a romantic, likeable image neither deserved.

Contrary to popular belief Clyde Barrow wasn't a criminal incompetent, a sadist or master criminal. He was simply a skilled getaway driver and excellent shot whose ambition outstripped his talent. Born in Florida, he grew up as a petty criminal in the West Dallas slums. Catching the criminal bug from older brother Buck, it never left him.

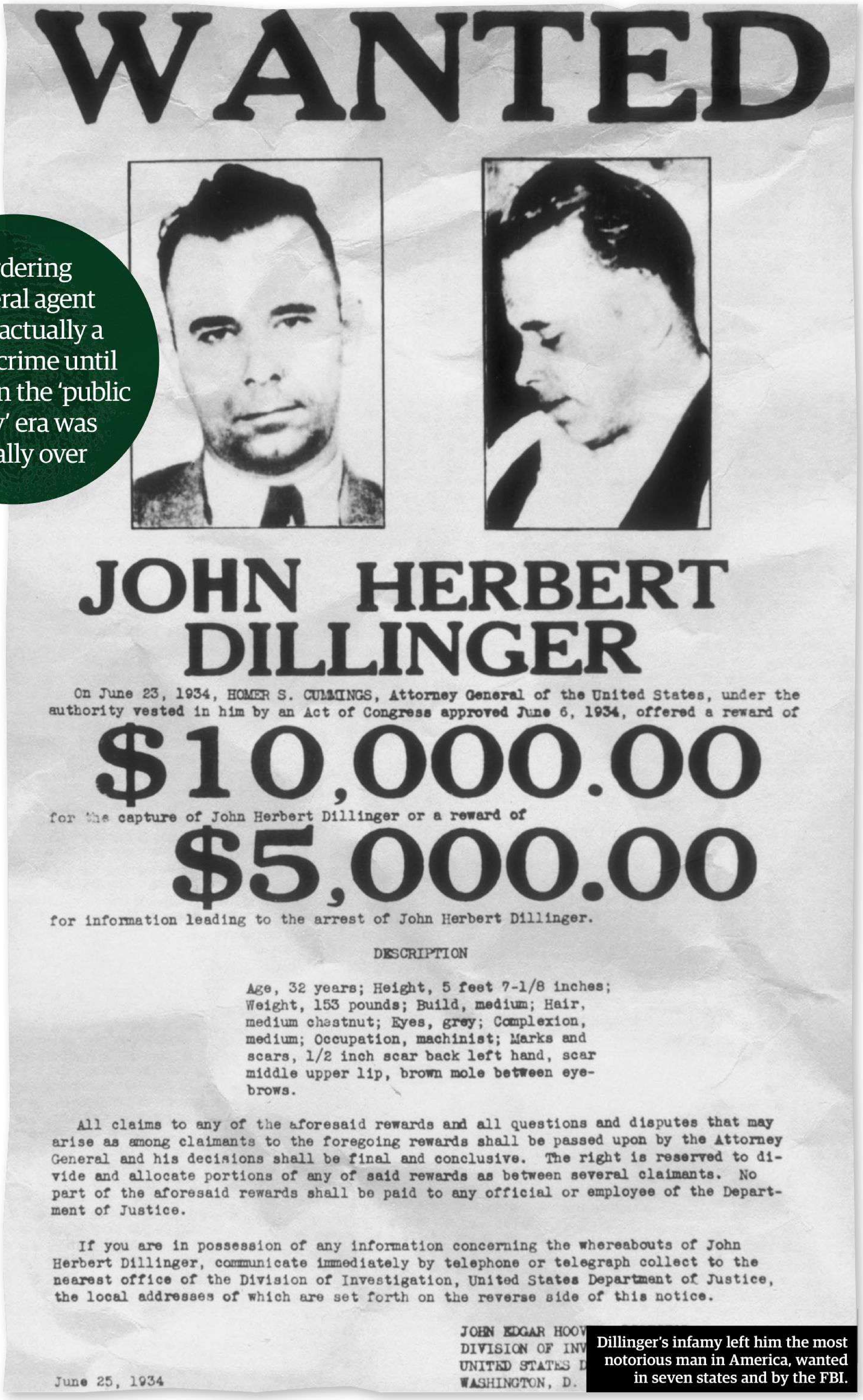
Murdering a Federal agent wasn't actually a Federal crime until 1935 when the 'public enemy' era was virtually over



Lester Gillis aka 'Baby Face' Nelson. Homicidal sadist Gillis happily killed for killing's sake. No brutality was off-limits to him.


TEXAS
65949
HENRY METHVIN.
Age 20 (1931).Ht 5-9½ Wt 170. Hair Lt.Brown

Henry Methvin, last of the Barrow Gang. His father Ivy assisted Bonnie and Clyde's ambush to protect his son



WANTED

JOHN HERBERT DILLINGER

On June 23, 1934, HOMER S. CUMMINGS, Attorney General of the United States, under the authority vested in him by an Act of Congress approved June 6, 1934, offered a reward of

$10,000.00

for the capture of John Herbert Dillinger or a reward of

$5,000.00

for information leading to the arrest of John Herbert Dillinger.

DESCRIPTION

Age, 32 years; Height, 5 feet 7-1/8 inches; Weight, 153 pounds; Build, medium; Hair, medium chestnut; Eyes, grey; Complexion, medium; Occupation, machinist; Marks and scars, 1/2 inch scar back left hand, scar middle upper lip, brown mole between eyebrows.

All claims to any of the aforesaid rewards and all questions and disputes that may arise as among claimants to the foregoing rewards shall be passed upon by the Attorney General and his decisions shall be final and conclusive. The right is reserved to divide and allocate portions of any of said rewards as between several claimants. No part of the aforesaid rewards shall be paid to any official or employee of the Department of Justice.

If you are in possession of any information concerning the whereabouts of John Herbert Dillinger, communicate immediately by telephone or telegraph collect to the nearest office of the Division of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, the local addresses of which are set forth on the reverse side of this notice.

JOHN EDGAR HOOV
DIVISION OF INV
UNITED STATES D
WASHINGTON, D.

June 25, 1934

Dillinger's infamy left him the most notorious man in America, wanted in seven states and by the FBI.

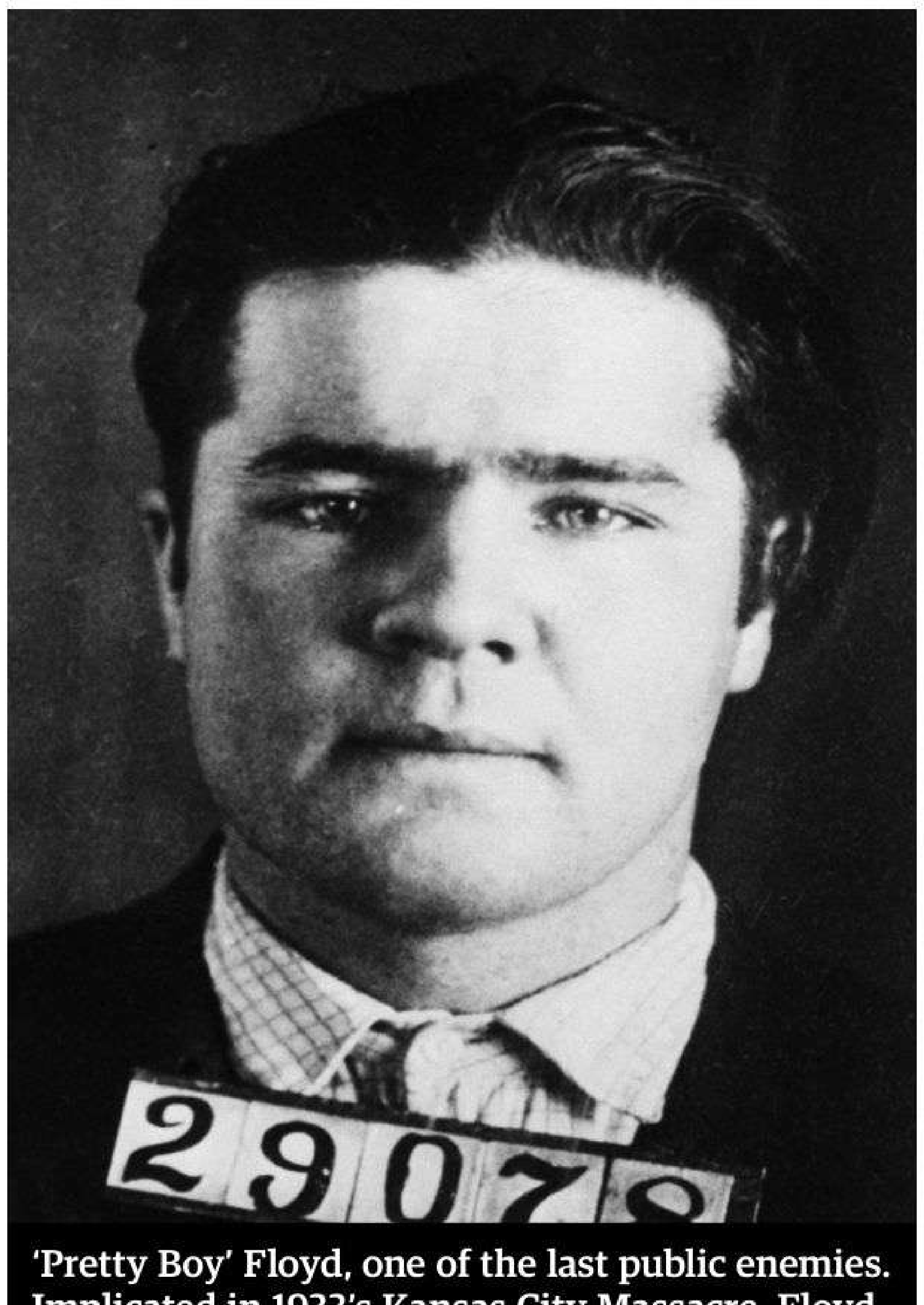
> "Contrary to popular belief Clyde Barrow wasn't a criminal incompetent, a sadist or master criminal"

© Corbis; Alamy

John Dillinger's body on display in a Chicago morgue following his death

Neither did Bonnie Parker. Bonnie never married Clyde, having already married minor crook Roy Thornton. Like Clyde, Bonnie was a nobody who wanted to be somebody. Clyde also wanted life's finer things but disdained honest work, committing numerous thefts and burglaries.

When Clyde was jailed in March 1930 Bonnie helped him escape, smuggling a gun into the jail. Quickly recaptured, he went to Eastham Prison. While Texas had the worst prison system in America, Eastham was the worst prison in Texas.



'Pretty Boy' Floyd, one of the last public enemies. Implicated in 1933's Kansas City Massacre, Floyd died in questionable circumstances

Clyde narrowly survived. Hard labour, poor food and brutality were standard practice, while inmates fought among themselves. One, Ed Crowder, repeatedly raped Clyde and hard labour almost killed him. At Eastham, Crowder became Clyde's first known murder. Clyde chopped two toes off one foot to get out, earning himself a permanent limp. Only days later he was pardoned anyway and released.

Clyde vowed he'd never be jailed again. He'd only revisit Eastham, he said, to free every inmate and kill every guard. That said, arranging a mass prison break needed money and firepower. The only way to get both was to steal them. The Barrow Gang's spree was about to begin.

Lacking the criminal skill or connections of top-flight bandits, Bonnie and Clyde robbed far more gas stations, drugstores and grocer's shops than banks. They seldom took more than a hundred dollars, often less. The Barker-Karpis Gang once took $240,000 in a single robbery. Bonnie and Clyde managed less in their entire career. Their largest haul was $3,800.

They also committed many murders. At least 11 people died at their hands and many more were injured. Clyde also recruited older brother Buck, Ray Hamilton and teenager WD Jones. Only Hamilton had any significant criminal pedigree, the others were small-timers Clyde recruited along the way. Hamilton proved a constant problem.

Both Clyde and Hamilton were small men with big egos and controlling natures. Neither worked well with others, Hamilton regularly needling Clyde. They argued over the Eastham raid, something Clyde desperately wanted and Hamilton wasn't interested in. Clyde resented Hamilton's skill, Hamilton thought Clyde trigger-happy. Before long Hamilton quit, being arrested, tried and sent to Eastham shortly afterward.

They drove up to 1,600 kilometres a day, stopping only to rest and rob. Clyde always drove, preferring Ford V8s wherever he could get one. The V8 was fast, easily driven and easily stolen, perfect when local cops often had slow pick-up trucks.

Another advantage was firepower. Most local cops then carried revolvers and might own a shotgun or rifle for hunting. The gang raided National Guard armouries for the Browning Automatic Rifle, Clyde's favourite. The BAR fired 650 armour-piercing bullets per minute. Tommy guns, automatic pistols, revolvers and shotguns completed their arsenal.

They could often out-run or out-gun pursuers although there were several lucky escapes. In Joplin, Missouri they narrowly escaped a shoot-out in April 1933. July saw shoot-outs in Platte City, Missouri and Dexter, Iowa. In Dexter Buck was mortally wounded. Clyde, breaking his promise never to desert them, left Buck and wife Blanche to be captured. The spree continued into 1934. Drugstores, grocers, gas stations and occasionally banks providing little money and lots of bloodshed. The worst was yet to come. Clyde still hadn't forgotten about Eastham.

'The Bloody Ham' had remained as miserable as ever. Clyde also had another reason. Ray Hamilton

> Armour-piercing 'cop killer' bullets like the Super .38 and .357 Magnum were originally invented for cops to use against robbers

Bonnie and Clyde have been overly glamorised by the media. Minor crooks at best, their profile far exceeds their ability

Safe havens: A gangster's paradise

Crossing state lines was one way to evade capture. Constant movement was another. Gangsters with money and connections had another option, safe havens operated by corrupt cops, politicians and local gangsters. If they could afford steep fees they could live, openly and unmolested, in towns where cops were as crooked as robbers.

Hot Springs, Arkansas was effectively a gangster's paradise run by transplanted New York gangster Owny 'The Killer' Madden. With Madden's approval fugitives could live there in peace unless Federal agents found them. Local police were largely on Madden's payroll, even chief detective 'Dutch' Akers.

St Paul, Minnesota was run by Harry Sawyer out of his notorious 'Green Lantern' tavern. Gangsters like Dillinger and the Barker-Karpis Gang lived there quite openly. Through Sawyer and corrupt police and politicians, fugitives knew the deal – if they paid up and committed no crimes within or near St Paul, they had little to worry about.

Joplin, Missouri was equally notorious, although less attractive following the Barrow Gang's shoot-out there in April 1933. Joplin's arrangement wasn't as formal as those of St Paul or Hot Springs. The risk of honest police actually policing the town made it less of a safe haven.

was jailed there and his brother Floyd informed Clyde he wanted out. Clyde duly obliged on 16 January 1934, springing Hamilton, murderer Joe Palmer, double murderer Hilton Bybee and Henry Methvin. Recruiting Methvin was a fatal mistake.

The raid was also fatal for guard Major Joel Crowson, shot by either Palmer or Hamilton. Guard Bozeman was wounded, but survived. On his death-bed Crowson identified Clyde to Lee Simmons, head of the Texas prison system. Before Crowson's death Simmons promised him the gang would be destroyed. Simmons knew the man for the job, legendary former Texas Ranger Frank Hamer.

Hamer was an old-school Ranger, tough and ruthless. His mind was as quick as his gun. He was tireless and clever, learned a fugitive's habits, their favourite clothes, cars, guns, even their favourite alcohol and cigarettes. The better Hamer knew them, the easier he caught them. Or killed them. As he himself put it: "The best way to enforce the law is with a .45 in the gut."

Hamer tracked them endlessly. Clyde was a dandy, loving expensive clothes. Contrary to myth Bonnie smoked cigarettes, not cigars. He learned everything he could about them. Most importantly he found their love-nest in an abandoned house near Gibsland, Louisiana, not far from Henry Methvin's parents.

To save Henry his parents offered a deal. If they helped Hamer, Henry would be pardoned in Texas. The deal was made. An ambush was set.

With Hamer were Dallas lawmen Ted Hinton and Bob Alcorn, both had known Bonnie and Clyde before their crime spree. Local Deputy Sheriff Prentiss Oakley, highway patrolman Manny Gault and Oakley's boss, Bienville County Sheriff Henderson Jordan. Jordan and Hamer had brokered Ivy Methvin's deal with Texas Governor Miriam Ferguson.

The ambush site was an isolated road outside Gibsland, Louisiana. The ambush party were heavily armed and Simmons had specifically asked Hamer to kill them. After waiting a couple of days, Ivy Methvin grudgingly agreed to help. On the morning of 23 April 1934 Methvin parked his truck nearby, pretending to have broken down. If Bonnie and Clyde arrived they'd probably stop. If they stopped or slowed, Bonnie and Clyde would die.

They did stop. The posse raked them with more than 150 bullets.

The Barker-Karpis Gang were equally vicious without the enduring infamy of Dillinger or the Barrow Gang. Barker brothers Arthur and Fred with Fred Goetz, Volney Davis, Bryan Bolton and their probable leader Alvin 'Creepy' Karpis committed a string of armed robberies and murders. According to FBI Director J Edgar Hoover they were led by Kate 'Ma' Barker, who taught them every form of violent crime. According to most more objective sources Hoover used her as a scapegoat to explain FBI agents killing her and Fred in Florida in 1935. As fellow yegg Harvey Bailey put it, "That old woman couldn't plan breakfast."

Like Dillinger and the Barrow Gang they exploited fast cars, automatic weapons, bulletproof vests, inexperienced FBI agents and crossing state lines to evade capture. Unlike the others they were also kidnappers demanding large cash ransoms on pain of death.

Raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Barkers were all juvenile delinquents and petty crooks. Ma always proclaimed their innocence of any crimes and obstructed efforts to catch them. It's highly unlikely Ma Barker was anything more than a willing accomplice, no evidence exists of her active participation. Very few sources support Hoover's opinion.

Between 1932 and 1936 the Barker-Karpis Gang robbed banks, post offices and payrolls, stealing several hundred thousand dollars. They also committed numerous murders, including suspected informants and gang members considered untrustworthy. In 1935 Karpis even robbed a train in Garretsville, Ohio and Chicago's Federal Reserve Bank netted a big score in September 1933. Their largest robbery was in Concordia, Kansas in 1932, taking $240,000.

They earned considerably more from kidnapping. In Minneapolis, Minnesota they abducted brewery heir William Hamm on 15 June 1933. The $100,000 was quickly paid, securing Hamm's release. The kidnapping occurred only two days before the Kansas City Massacre which boosted Hoover's efforts to make the FBI credible crime-fighters.

On 17 January 1934, the day after Clyde's Eastham prison raid, the Barkers abducted Edward Bremer, manager of the Jacob Schmidt Brewing Company, demanding $200,000. Coming so soon after 1932's Lindbergh kidnapping and almost coinciding with Eastham and Kansas City, the Barker-Karpis Gang found themselves hunted everywhere.

Regular robberies increased their take and their mounting body count. Heists, shoot-outs and murders in North Dakota, Minnesota, Kansas, Illinois, Nebraska, Missouri, New Jersey and Ohio cost over a dozen lives. When Karpis was captured in New Orleans in April 1936 he was accused of committing at least nine murders personally and implicated in at least 16. If captured they risked execution in at least seven states.

They were ruthless in killing police officers and sometimes bystanders, but perhaps most ruthless toward their own accomplices. Underworld doctor Joseph Moran and gang member Arthur Dunlap died as suspected informers. The gang were fully prepared to kill even their own if they came under suspicion.

Law enforcement were equally ruthless, especially the FBI. Every public enemy caught or killed was grist to Hoover's mill and the Barker-Karpis gang were no exception. Hoover's publicity machine trumpeted FBI successes as loudly as possible. Slain gangsters made for good column inches and newsreels, the bodies of Dillinger and 'Pretty Boy' Floyd being publicly displayed. The Barker-Karpis Gang were luckier than most. Most were taken alive with the notable, controversial exceptions of Fred and Ma.

In January 1935 they were tracked to a secluded house near Oklawaha, Florida. The shoot-out lasted several hours, Ma and Fred fought even after tear gas was fired through the windows. When police and FBI agents finally entered the building Ma and Fred were both dead. Hoover claimed Ma had died shooting beside her son. This has always been fiercely debated, Hoover being accused of lying to justify her death and increase public support for his Bureau.

Ma and Fred went to their graves. Surprisingly, most of the gang went to prison. Arthur 'Dock' Barker was captured in Chicago in January 1935 with Bryan Bolton. 'Dock' died in 1939 trying to escape Alcatraz. Also on the Rock was Bill Weaver who died of a heart attack in 1944. Volney Davis and Harry Campbell served decades before their release and disappearance into obscurity.

Last to be caught was Alvin Karpis. By then the G-Men were mopping up the last of the public enemies, Karpis's arrest in New Orleans in April 1936 was marked by the personal appearance of J Edgar Hoover himself. Stung by political criticism of his never having personally arrested anyone and with his fitness to run the Bureau being questioned, Hoover claimed he personally arrested Karpis.

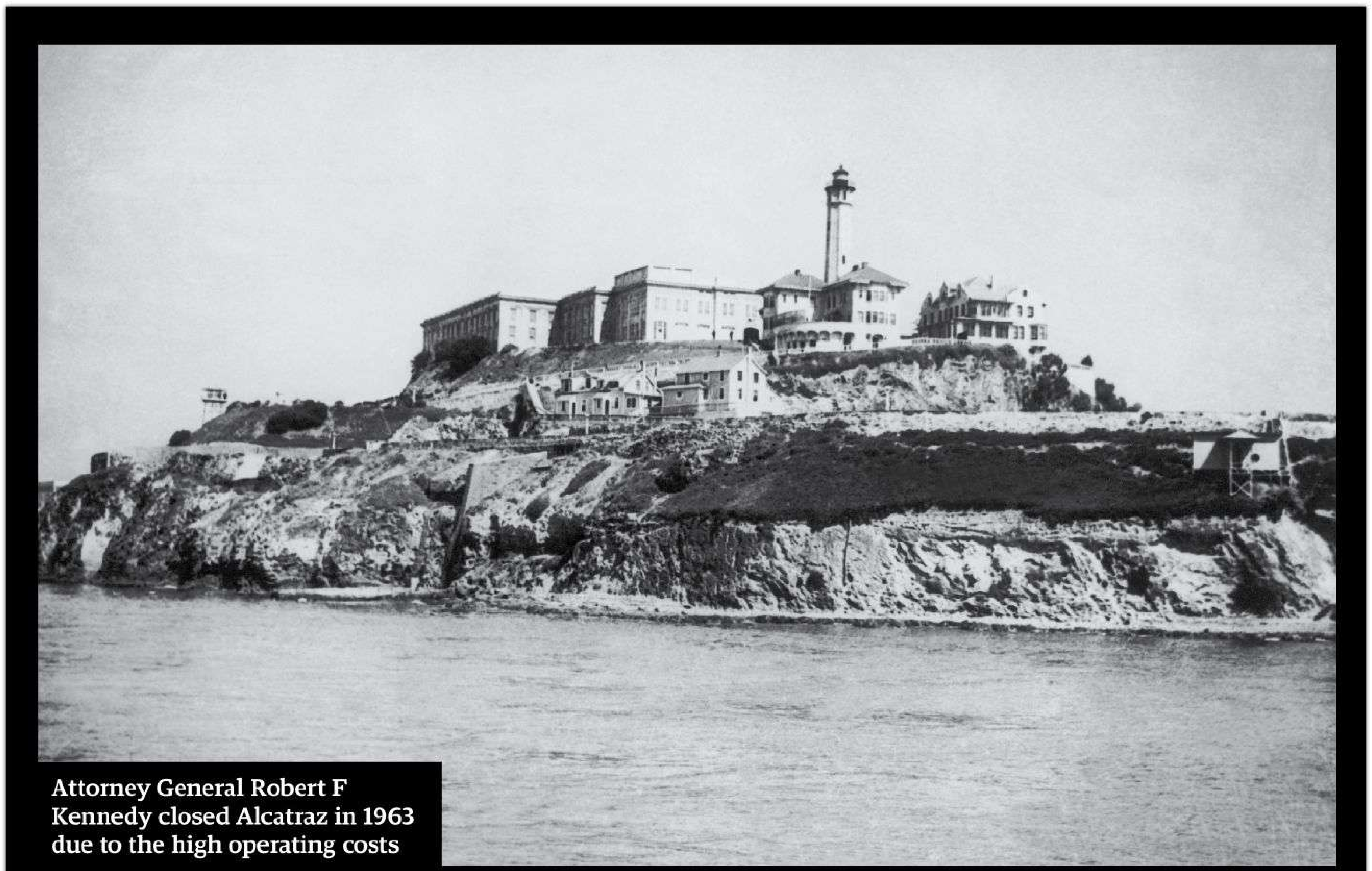
Crossing State lines prevented police pursuing outlaws outside their own jurisdictions

Karpis sneeringly disagreed, stating Hoover only appeared after agents had detained and disarmed him. As he later put it:

"If that version of my arrest is any criteria, you know, as to the contents of this book, oh boy, they should put it right on a shelf for fairytales."

Karpis re-joined the remaining gang members on Alcatraz in 1936, serving 26 years there and becoming its longest-serving inmate. Transferred to McNeil Island, he was finally released in 1969 after 33 years imprisonment. Harvey Bailey went to Alcatraz in August 1933. He was in prison until 1965.

By 1936 the public enemies were effectively finished, mostly imprisoned or dead. It's a measure of their enduring status that the FBI Academy shooting range is still haunted by one. Targets used by today's trainees still bear the face of a former Public Enemy Number One and celebrity gangster; John Dillinger.



Attorney General Robert F Kennedy closed Alcatraz in 1963 due to the high operating costs

Welcome to 'The Rock'

Originally a fort and military prison, Alcatraz opened in August 1934 as America's first supermax penitentiary. Alvin Karpis, George 'Machine Gun' Kelly, Al Capone, Arthur 'Dock' Barker and many others served time there. Perhaps its most famous inmate was murderer Robert Stroud, the 'Birdman of Alcatraz.'

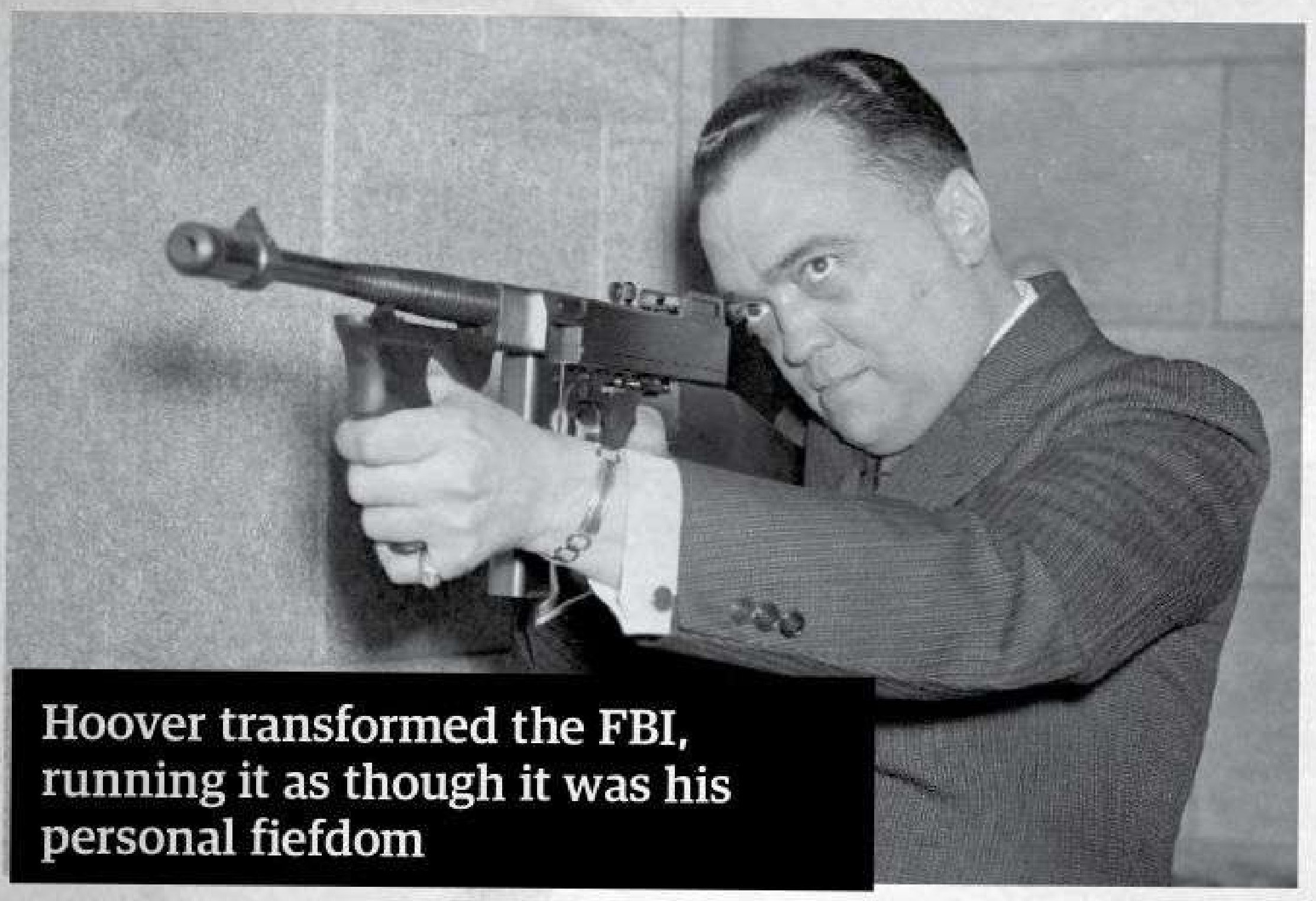
Alcatraz offered only maximum security, minimum privileges and harsh discipline. Minor infractions earned ordinary solitary confinement in D Block, serious infraction earned complete darkness in cells nicknamed 'The Dark Hole' without even a bed. In its early years underground dungeons were used, prisoners sometimes chained to their damp, cold, dark walls and beaten with knuckledusters and blackjacks.

Alcatraz's regime was intended expressly to break inmates. Regardless of notoriety inmates' mugshots didn't have names, just numbers. They gained nothing by conforming, but suffered for disobedience. Between 1934 and 1938 under the 'silent system' even talking without permission earned solitary confinement.

Dozens went mad, in the early years over 30 inmates were certified and suicide wasn't unusual. The sustained mental cruelty probably caused the 'Battle of Alcatraz' in 1946, a failed escape-turned-bloodbath. Three inmates and one guard died. Eleven inmates and guards were injured and two inmates, Miran Thompson and Sam Shockley, were executed.

A penal failure and financial sinkhole, Alcatraz closed on 21 March 1963. In that time 36 inmates made 14 escape attempts. 23 were caught, six shot dead, two drowned and five are 'Missing, presumed drowned.' Today it's Northern California's most popular tourist attraction receiving over one million visitors a year.

HUNTING THE PUBLIC ENEMIES


Hoover transformed the FBI, running it as though it was his personal fiefdom

J Edgar Hoover

Hoover transformed the FBI (then the Bureau of Investigation) from a ramshackle, corrupt, incompetent organisation into the institution it is today. Using Scotland Yard as a template, Hoover was a feared disciplinarian, firing agents for the slightest infraction. He wasn't always liked by politicians or even his own agents.

Purvis (left) with FBI Director Hoover. Once Hoover's favourite, he fell out of favour with his long-time boss

Melvin Purvis

An FBI agent since 1927, Purvis hunted Dillinger, 'Baby Face' Nelson and 'Pretty Boy' Floyd. He was accused of brutal interrogations and feuded with Hoover after Dillinger's death. He was also accused of ordering agent 'Ed' Hollis to shoot Floyd after he'd been wounded and disarmed. Purvis resigned in 1935

End of the road. Frank Hamer (top left) led the six-man ambush posse that finally ended Bonnie and Clyde's career

Frank Hamer

The archetypal Texas Ranger, Hamer had a keen mind and a fast gun. Active between 1905 and 1932, he came out of retirement specifically to hunt Bonnie and Clyde after the Eastham prison break in January 1934. They were the 53rd and 54th felons Hamer killed during his career.

> "By 1936 the public enemies were finished"

Cowley (left) and 'Ed' Hollis (right) were killed by Nelson at the 'Battle of Barrington.' Nelson died hours later

Samuel Cowley

Cowley arranged Anna Sage's betrayal of Dillinger and was one of three FBI agents murdered by 'Baby Face' Nelson, dying beside agent 'Ed' Hollis. Nelson, also mortally wounded, died hours after the shoot-out on 27 November 1934 nick-named the 'Battle of Barrington.' Cowley was one of Hoover's most-trusted aide's when he died.

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The Gunpowder Plot

Everyone remembers the fifth of November, but the true story of the men who plotted the gunpowder treason is often forgotten

When Queen Elizabeth I drew her last breath on her mammoth 44-year-long reign, Catholics around England let out their own sighs of relief. Life under Elizabeth had not been easy. Perhaps in retaliation to the brutal rule of her sister Mary, the devout Catholic queen, Elizabeth had introduced a range of legislations that hit Catholics hard. She was likely fearful of Catholics, and she had reason to be, as a Papal Bull declared that a Catholic's allegiance was not to the Crown, but to God. In one swift move, every Catholic in England was branded a traitor. Simply being a Catholic, or even sheltering Catholics, was not only illegal but akin to high treason. Terrified, but devoted to their faith, Catholics were forced underground and some 130 priests were executed. As the queen aged, many of the people who had suffered most under her reign began to hope for a successor who would be more sympathetic to their plight.

Considering how much was at stake, the crown passed to its next bearer incredibly smoothly. James I was the grandson of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret, Queen of Scots, and although he was a Protestant, his mother had been a devout Catholic. For the struggling Catholics, King James's early acts to relax the fines that they suffered were very encouraging. However, this joy quickly turned sour. Realising how the fines filled up the treasury, James reinstalled them and openly damned the Catholic faith. The hopes of many Catholics were crushed, and for some, this was the final straw.

If one man had felt the bitter sting of anti-Catholicism in England, it was Robert Catesby. A man from an illustrious family line that stretched back to William Catesby, trusted adviser of Richard III, his entire life he had watched his family's wealth be chipped away by harsh fines. When Catesby was only eight years old, he witnessed his father arrested and tried for harbouring a priest. For the remainder of his young years, his father was constantly in and out of prison. Catesby was tall, handsome and gifted, but he had been forced to drop out of his studies, as obtaining his degree required him to take the oath of supremacy, which swore allegiance to the queen and the Church of England. The Protestant monarchy had taken everything in Catesby's life: his childhood, his father, his fortune and his future.

Catesby possessed not only good looks, but also a generous and affable nature, and as a result, he had amassed a large

Catholic Crime & Punishment

Life for Catholics was anything but easy under the Protestant monarchs

Crime	Punishment
Not attending Anglican service	Initially fined 12 shillings, then raised to £20 per month
Attending a private Catholic mass	Imprisonment
Not paying fines	Imprisonment
Fleeing abroad for longer than six months without permission	Forfeit the profits of lands and all goods
Being a Catholic priest	Death
Refusing to accept the monarch as head of the Church	Imprisonment and death
Reconciling any person to the Catholic church	Death

A royal warrant suggested that if 'gentler tortures' proved fruitless, Guy Fawkes should be racked

and powerful circle of friends. His allegiance to the Catholic faith was no secret, and he had taken part in a previous rebellion. When Elizabeth fell ill in 1596, Catesby was arrested simply because the government feared he would take advantage of the situation and organise an uprising. Catesby's experiences typified the lives of all Catholics of the time; he was the beating heart of the Catholic struggle, and he was rich and influential enough to actually do something about it.

Catesby had a plan. Killing the king was not enough; Elizabeth's demise had proved that the death of a monarch did not ensure change. The status quo was against him, so the status quo needed to change. To do this, he would blast it to smithereens. In February 1604, Catesby invited Thomas Wintour and John Wright to his house. Wintour, Catesby's cousin, had also felt the sting of anti-Catholicism as his own uncle had been executed for being a priest. Wright was an old friend of Catesby's and had taken part in a rebellion against Elizabeth. In his house in Lambeth, Catesby revealed his grand plan – he would re-establish Catholicism by blowing up the House of Lords during the opening of Parliament. Not only would the king be present, but also the most powerful Protestants in the land. The attack would produce a power vacuum, and the Catholics would be poised to fill it.

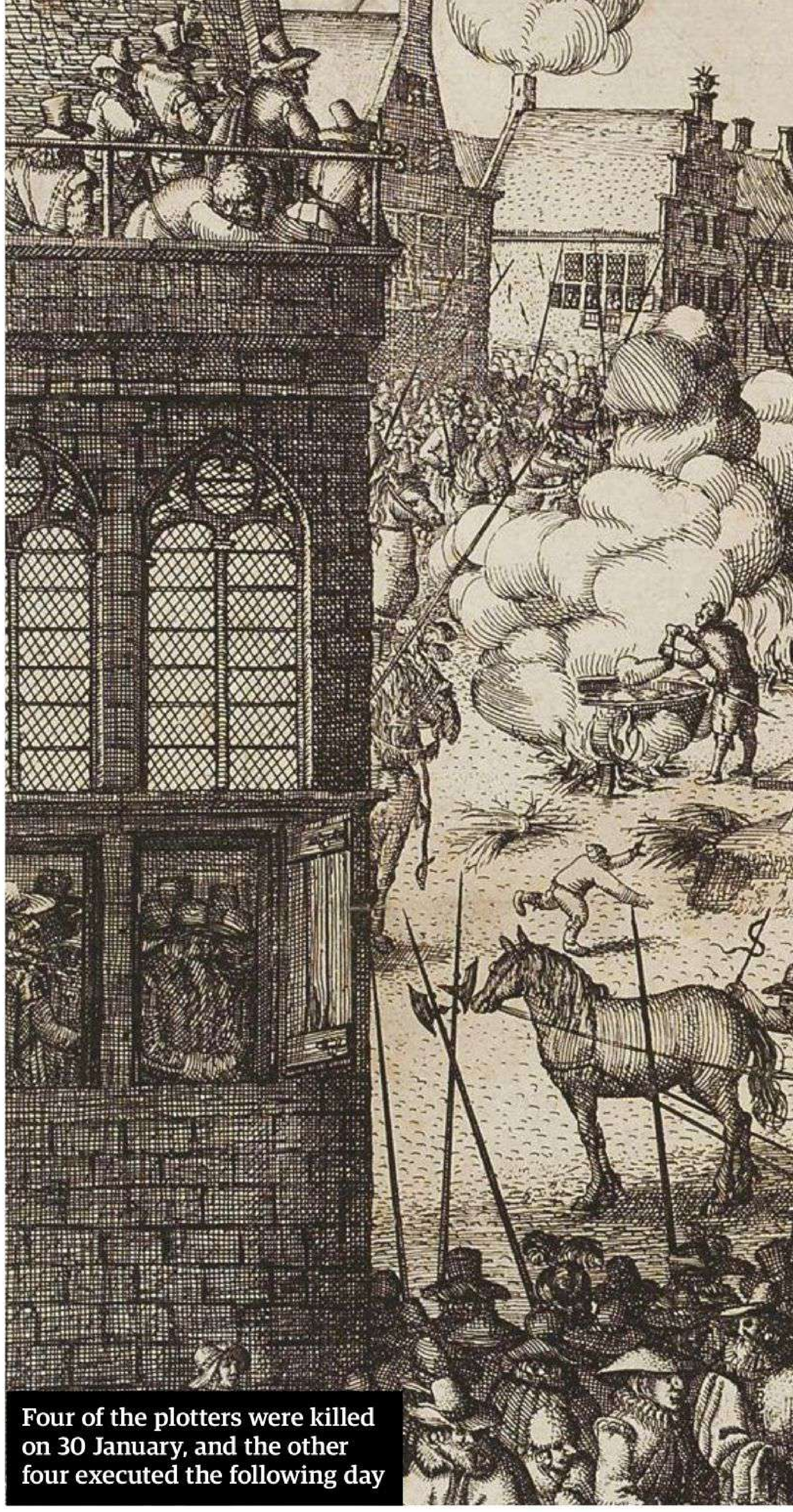
Wintour was shocked by his cousin's plans. He was quick to argue that, should they fail, it would put back their cause several years. Catesby responded: "The nature of the disease requires so sharp a remedy." He launched into a speech about the righteousness of his cause, and how Parliament was the perfect target as "in that place they have done us all the mischief." Catesby's charisma won around his cousin, who pledged his loyalty and life to the impassioned leader.

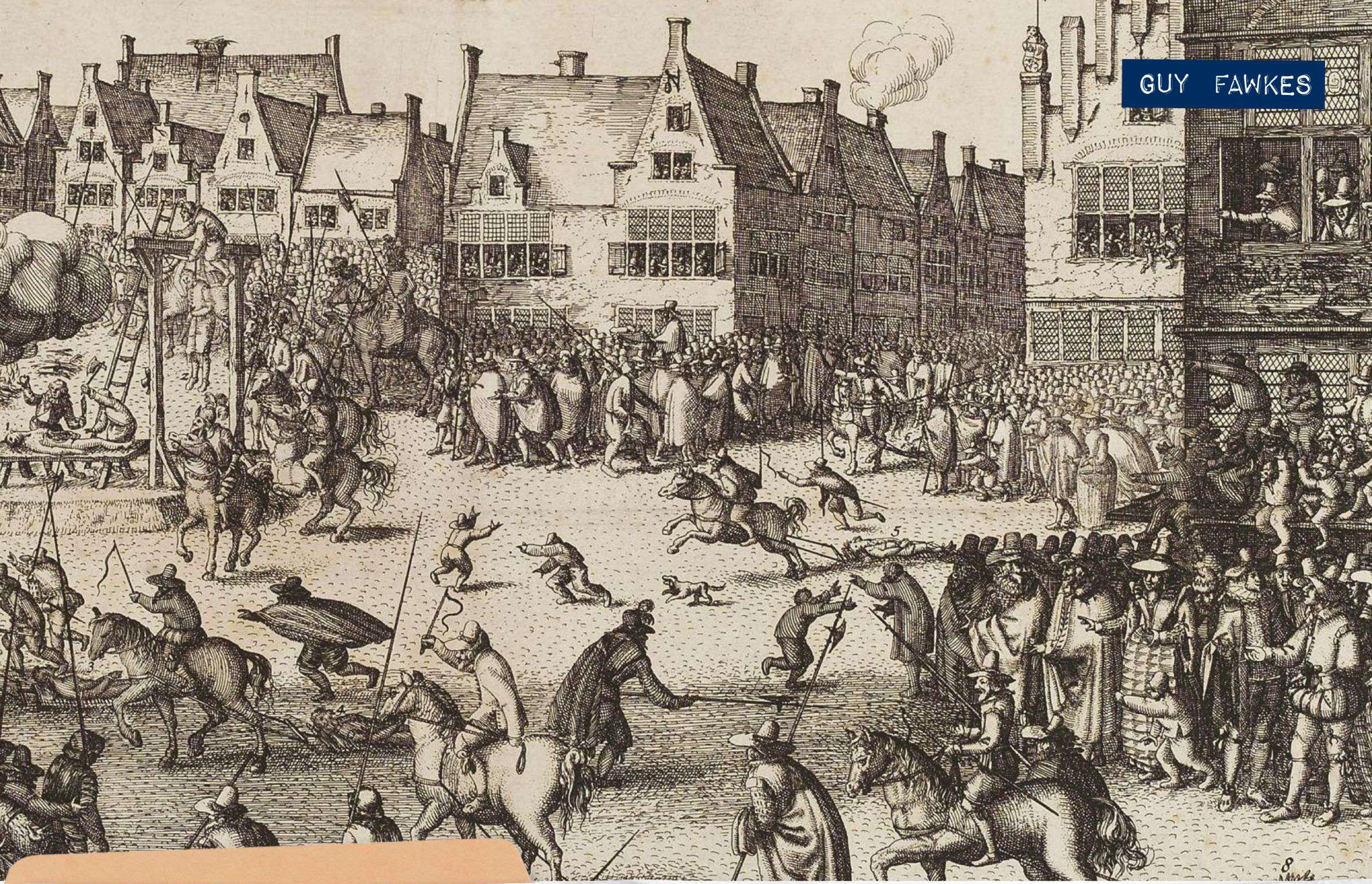
Catesby had recruited his first co-conspirators, and more were to follow. Seeking support from the Catholic Spain, Wintour travelled to Flanders. Although he struggled to obtain Spanish support, while there he sought out the man who was fated to become the face of the gunpowder plot – Guy Fawkes. Fawkes had made his Catholic allegiance very clear by fighting on the side of Spain during the Eighty Years' War and had been attempting to drum up support in the country. He was tall, well built with a mop of thick red-brown hair, and he was also determined, driven and skilled in all matters of war. However, there was one of Fawkes' talents that attracted Catesby in particular – his proficiency and knowledge of gunpowder.

When the men met again at the Duck and Drake Inn, they had drafted another conspirator, Thomas Percy, a dear friend of Catesby's. Percy had a reputation as a wild and rebellious youth. He had attempted to build a strong relationship with James I for the good of his religion, but now felt the bitter sting of betrayal. Percy, on a previous occasion, had to be stopped by Catesby from storming into the palace and taking down the king single-handedly. Together, these five passionate and wronged men met in the Catholic safe house and Catesby outlined the plan. Percy's support was almost a given, and he proclaimed: "Shall we always, gentlemen, talk and never do anything?" Swayed either by their enigmatic leader or their own hatred of Protestants, the five men swore an oath of secrecy upon a bible and received the Holy Communion from a priest secretly celebrating mass, completely unaware that the men were planning regicide.

With his first co-conspirators in place, Catesby sprung into action. The opening of Parliament had been postponed until 5 November the following year due to plague. This gave him plenty of time to prepare everything. Initially, Catesby figured the best way to get the gunpowder beneath the House of Lords would be to dig a tunnel, but the men soon realised a far safer way was to lease one of the storerooms that lay beneath. Luckily, Percy had a business in London, so could easily lease a storeroom without attracting suspicion. Explosives expert Guy Fawkes posed as John Johnson, Percy's servant, and was placed in the premises. The conspirators stored the gunpowder in Catesby's house and gradually ferried it across the Thames into the dwelling under the cover of darkness.

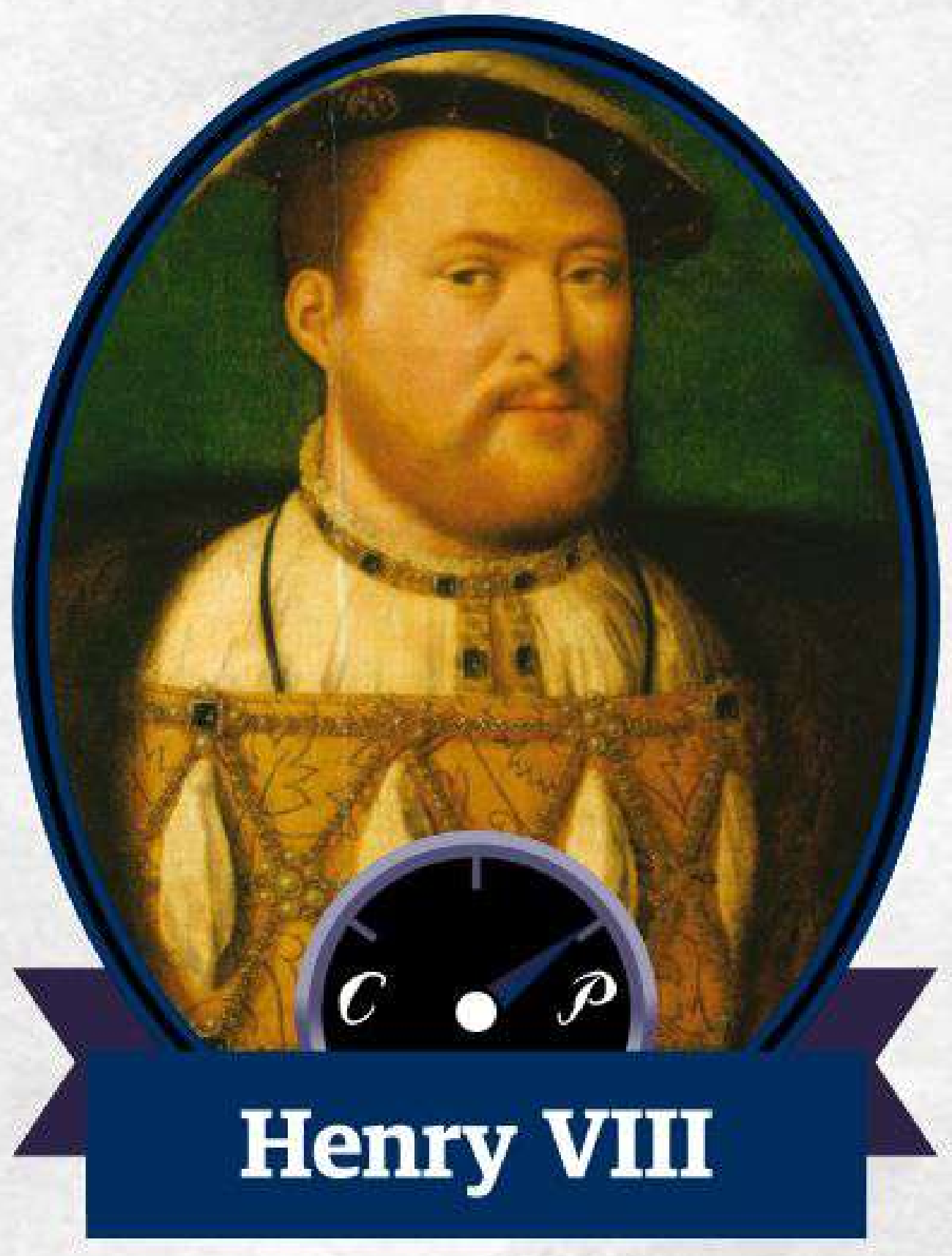
> "The status quo needed to change. To do this, he would blast it to smithereens"


Four of the plotters were killed on 30 January, and the other four executed the following day

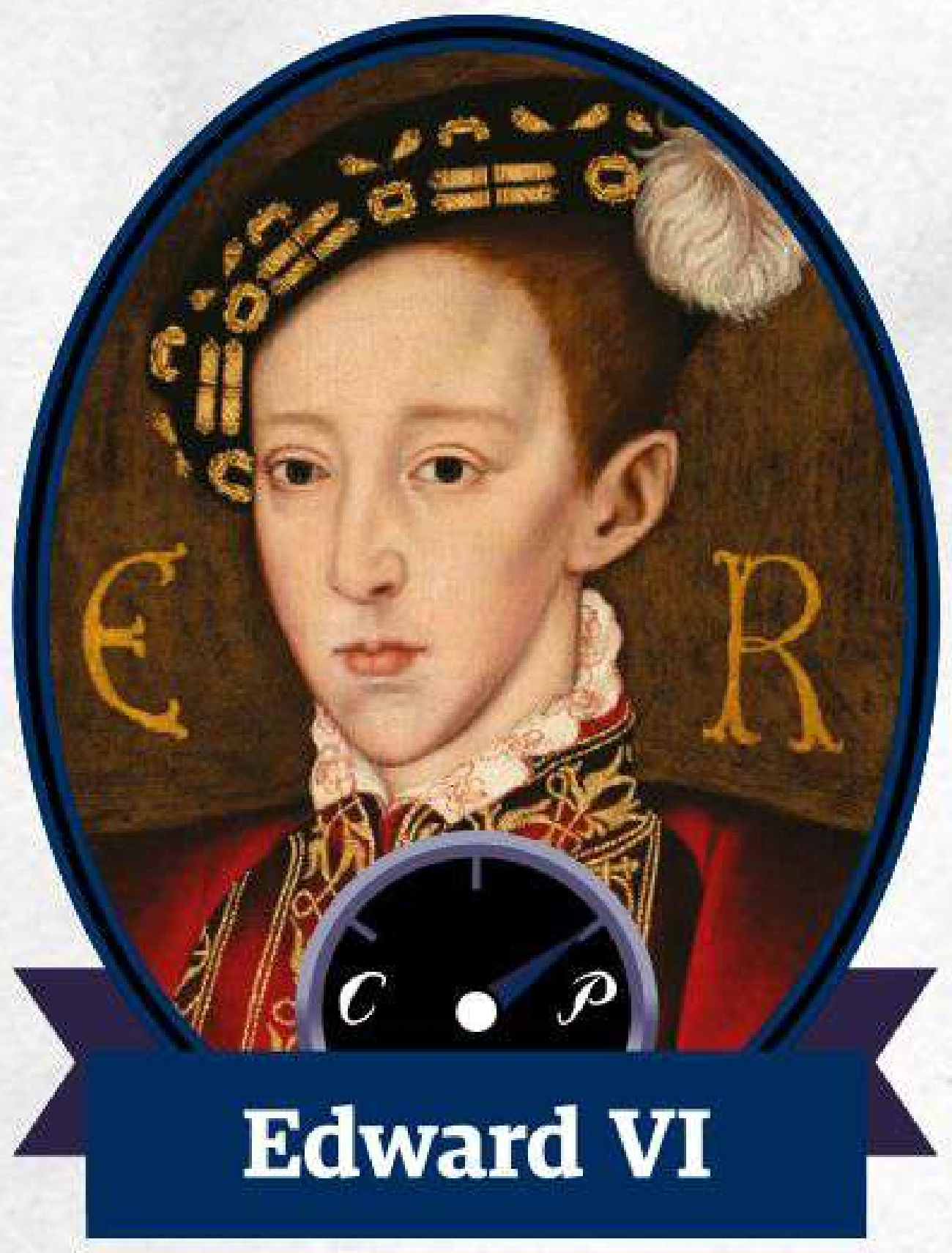


Turbulent times

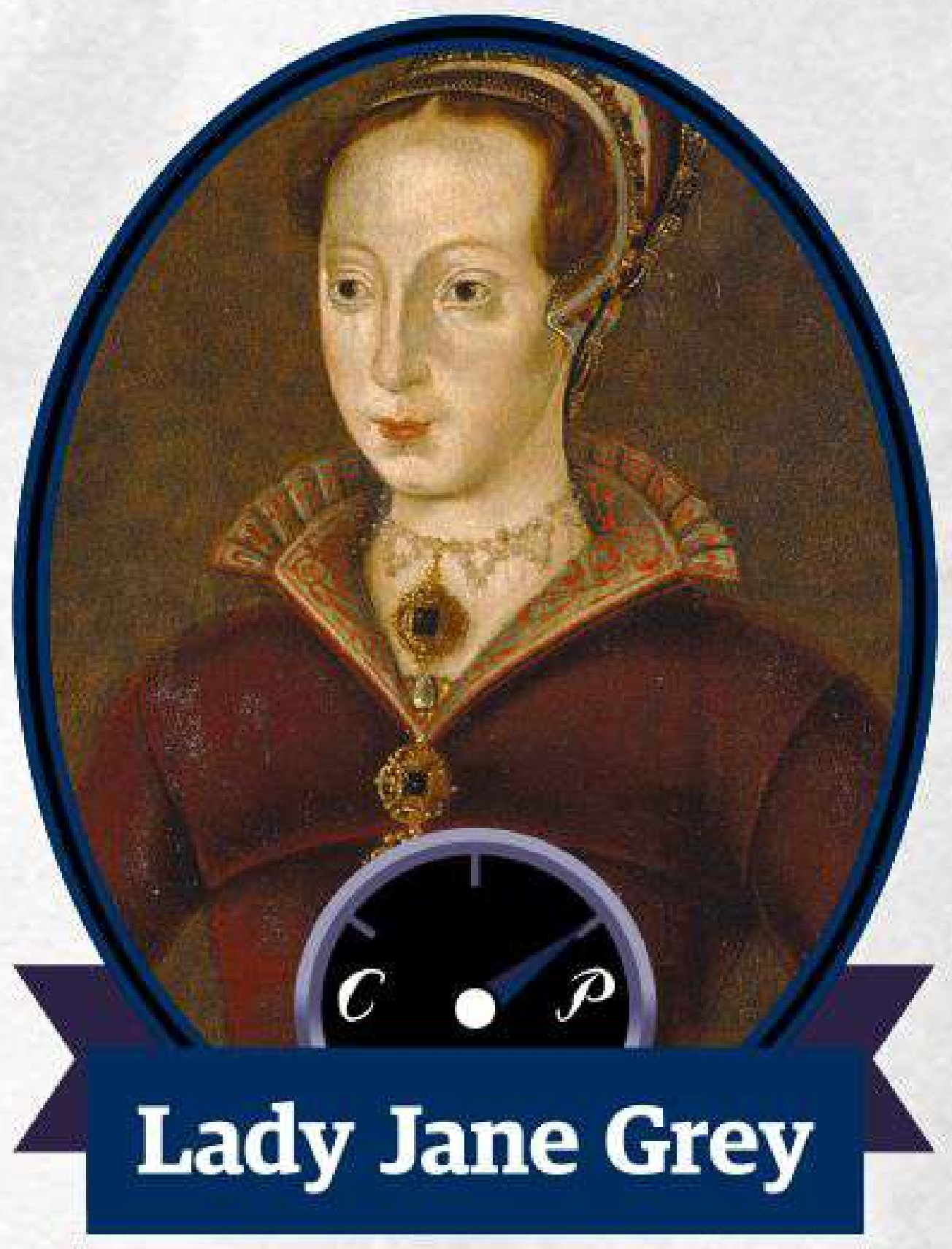
In the years following Henry VIII's break from Rome, the religion of the reigning monarch swung from Protestant to Catholic, with devastating effects for their subjects



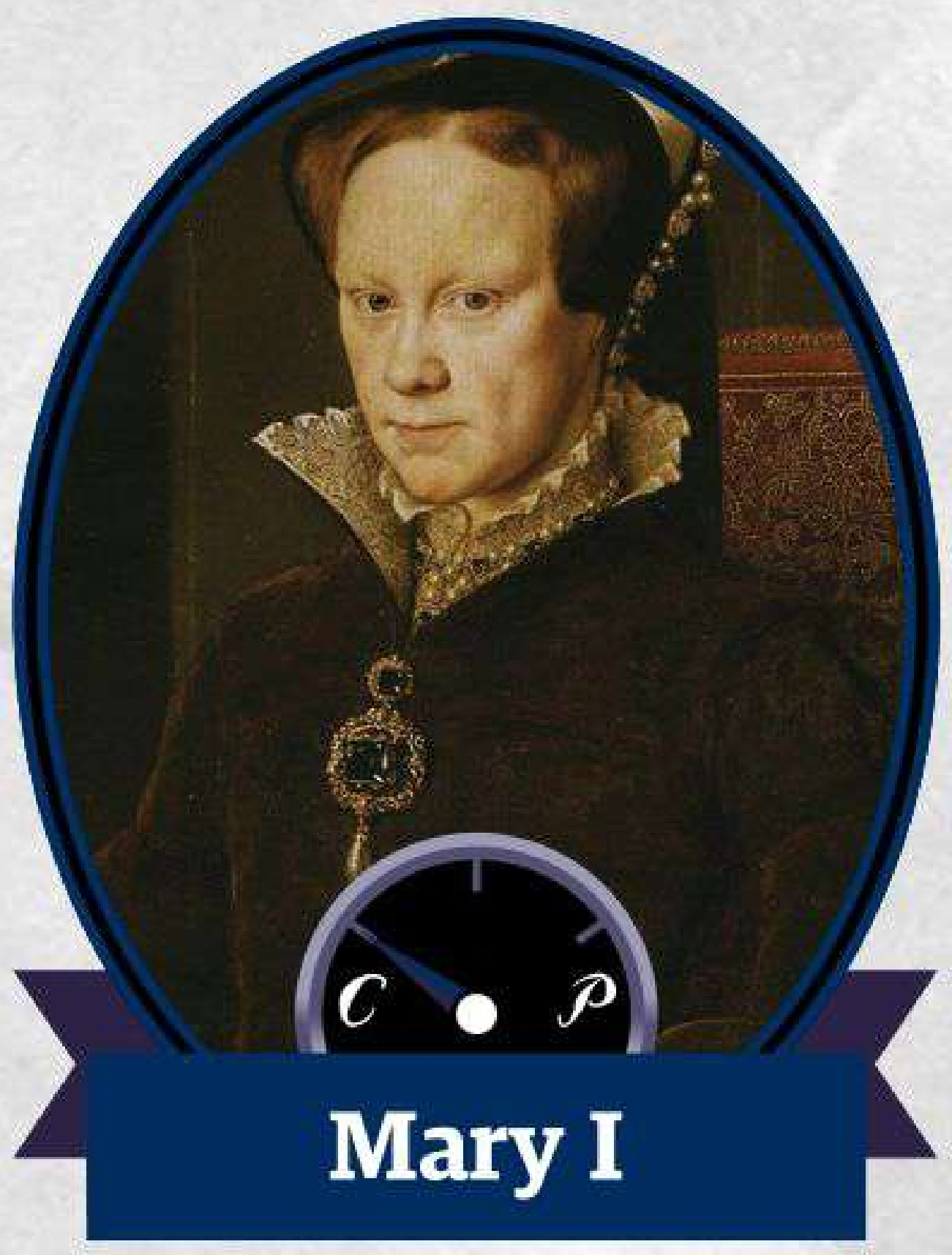
Henry VIII



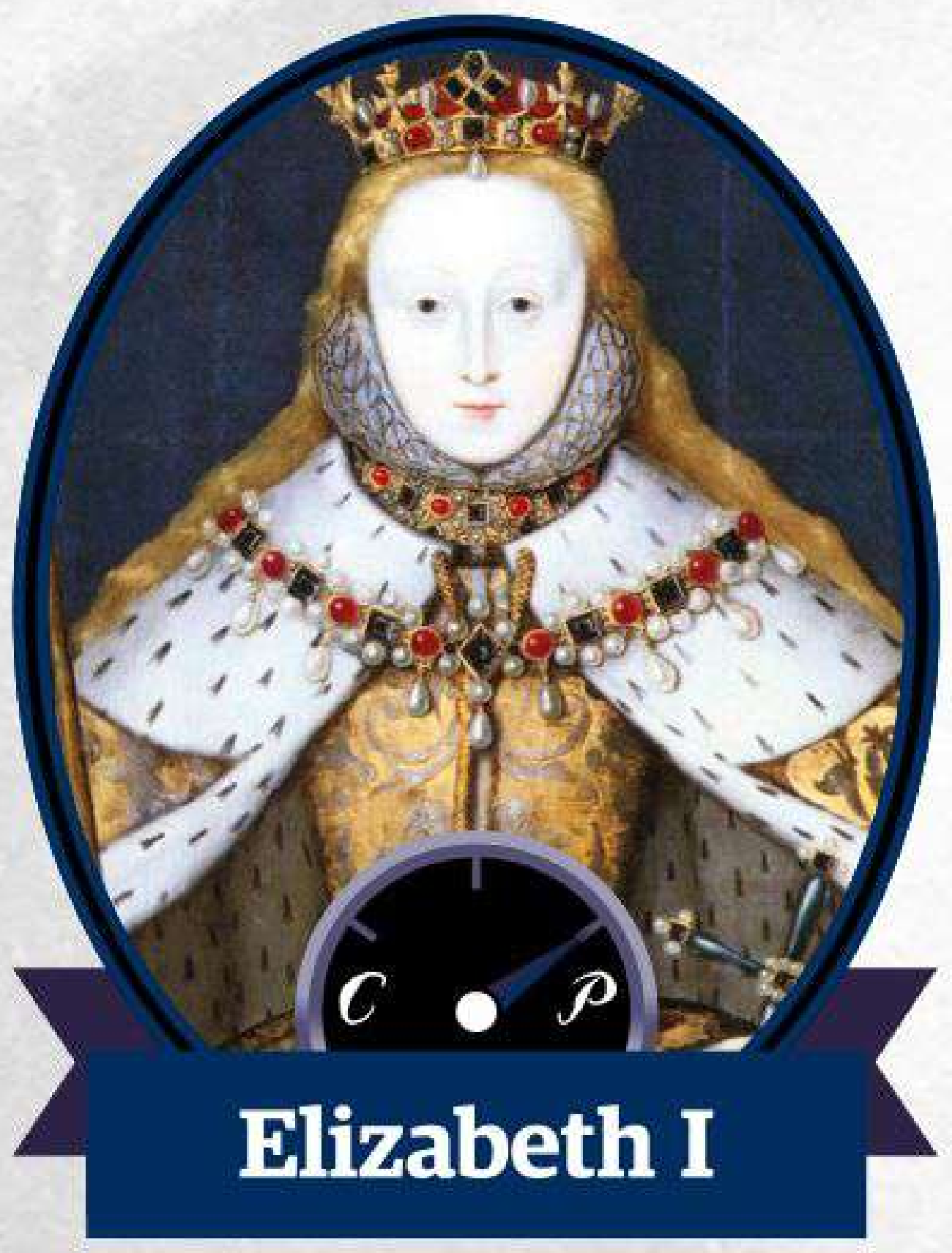
Edward VI



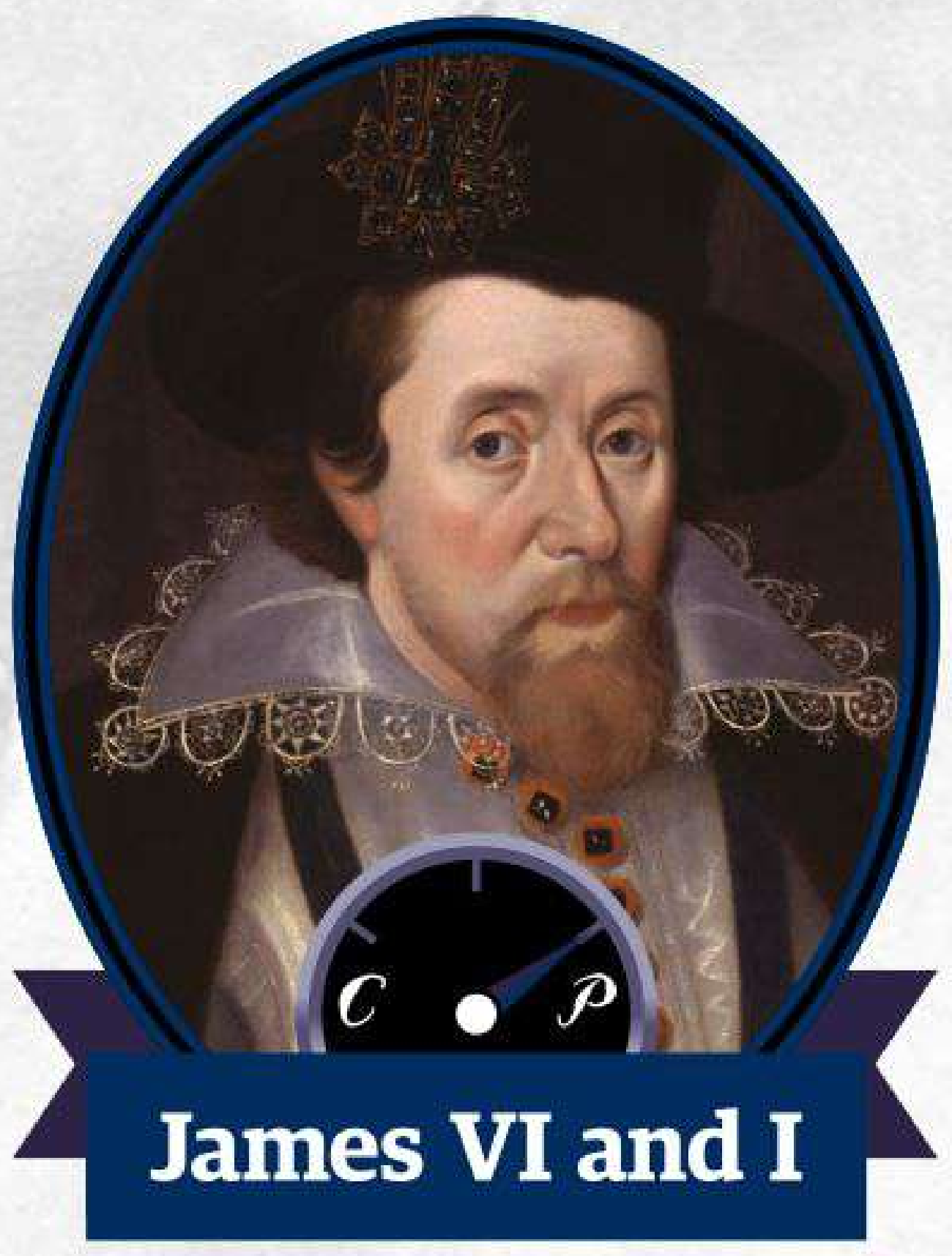
Lady Jane Grey



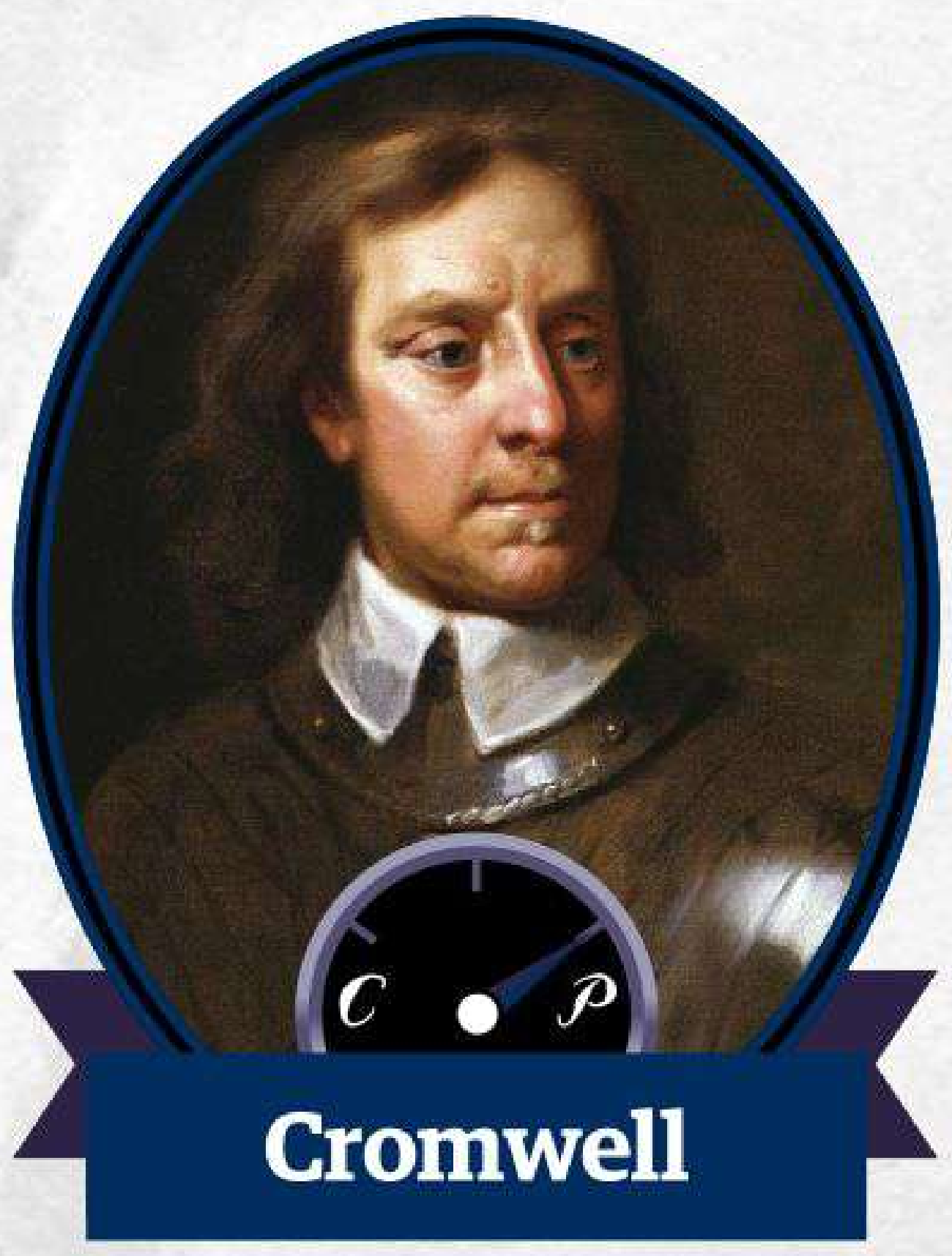
Mary I



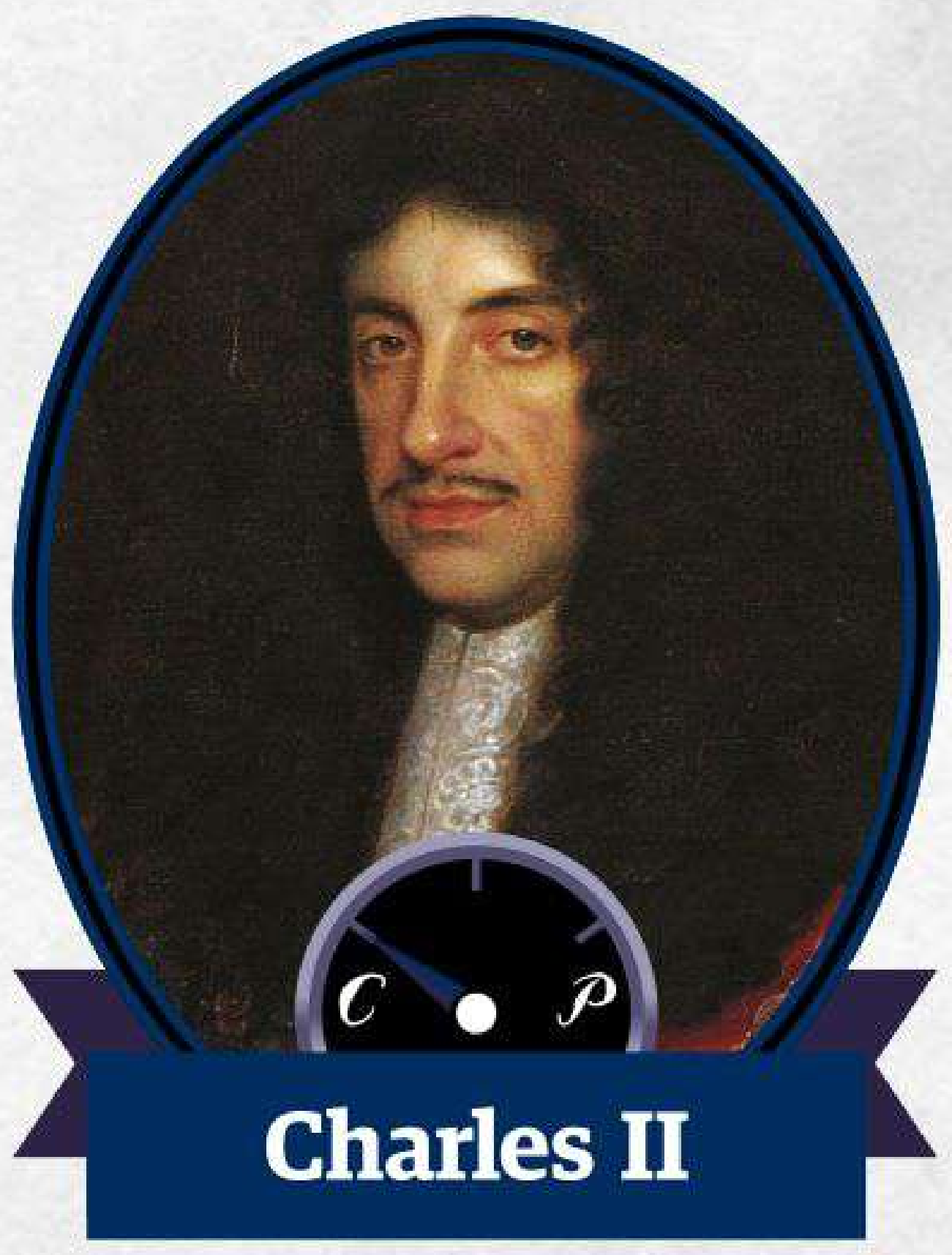
Elizabeth I



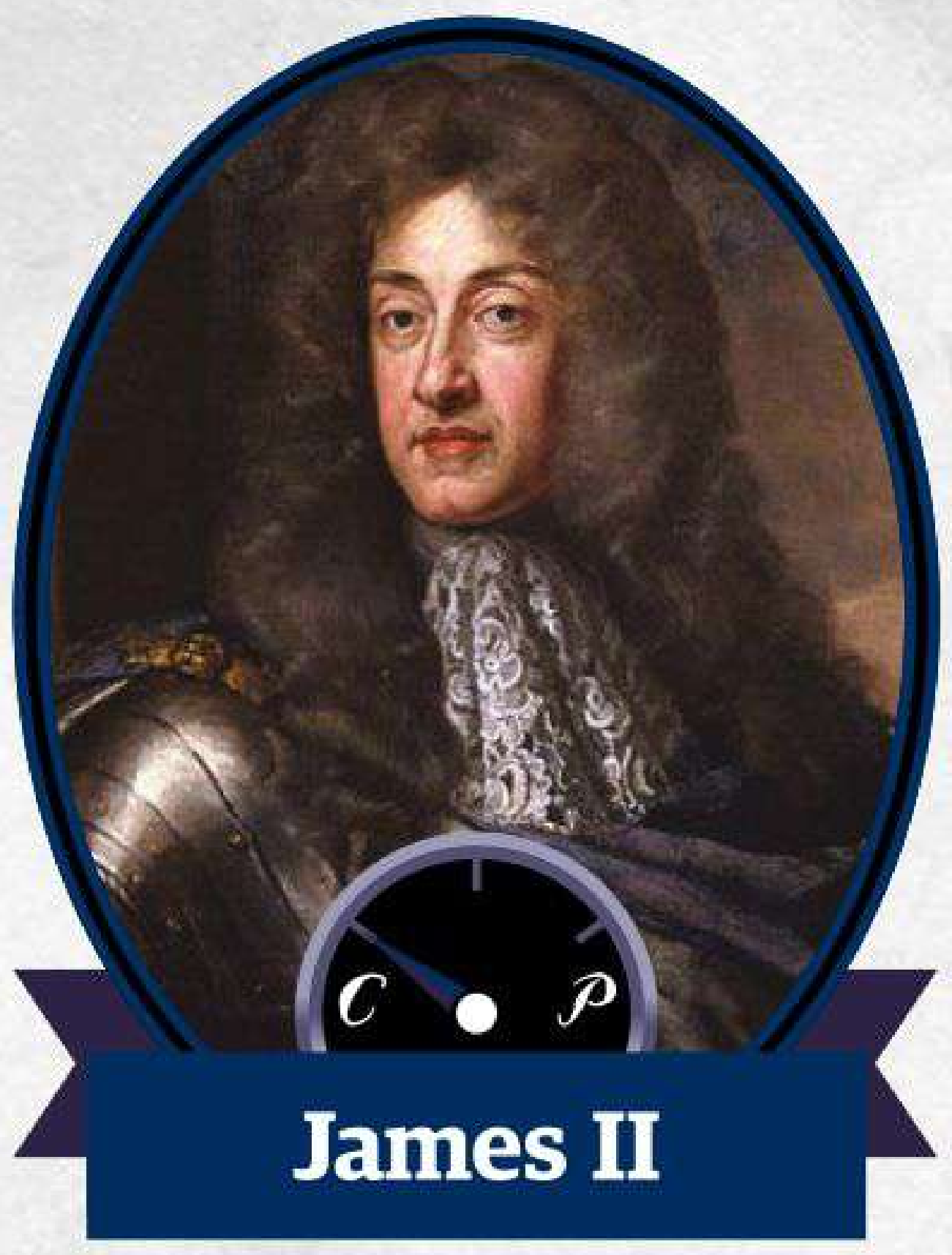
James VI and I



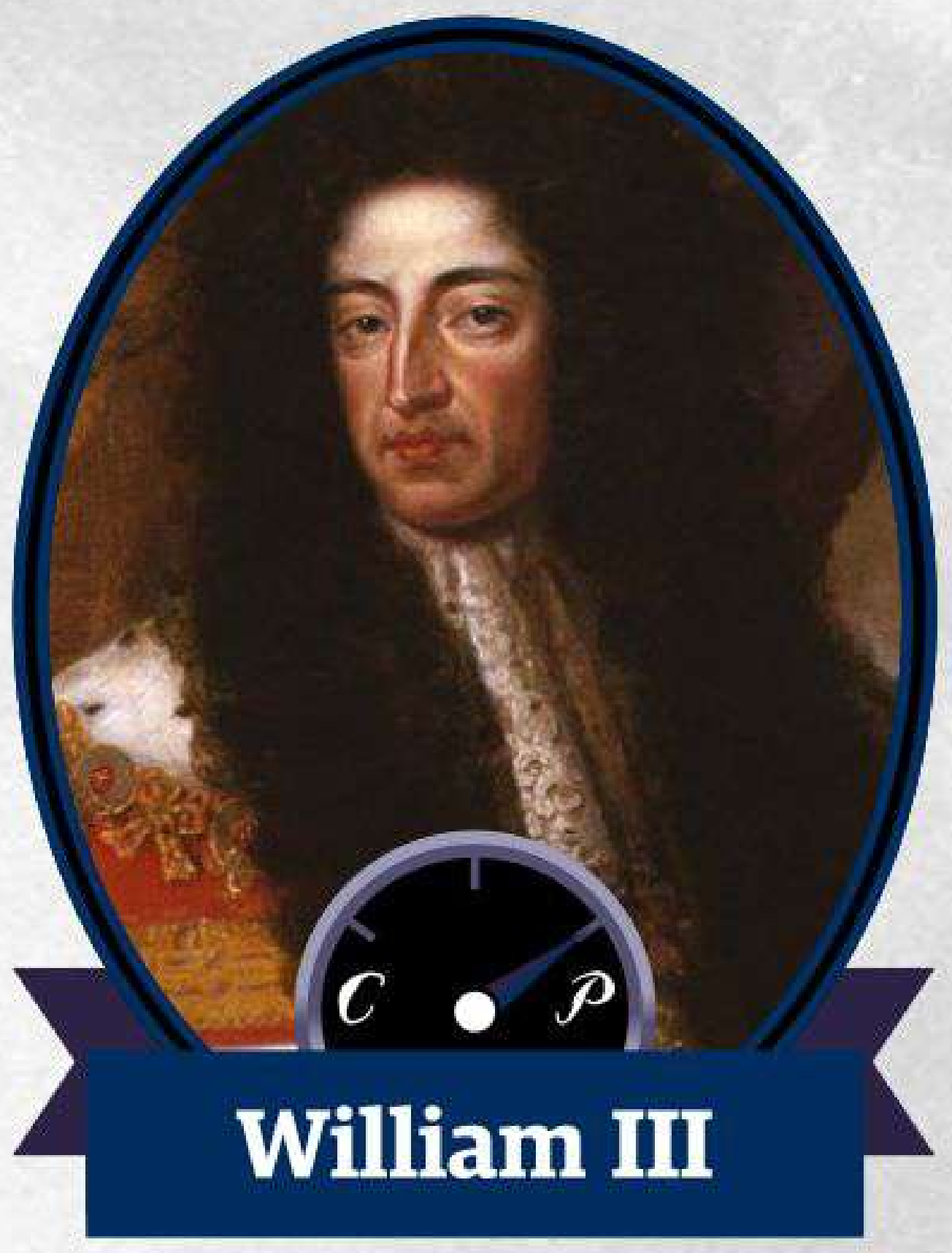
Cromwell



Charles II



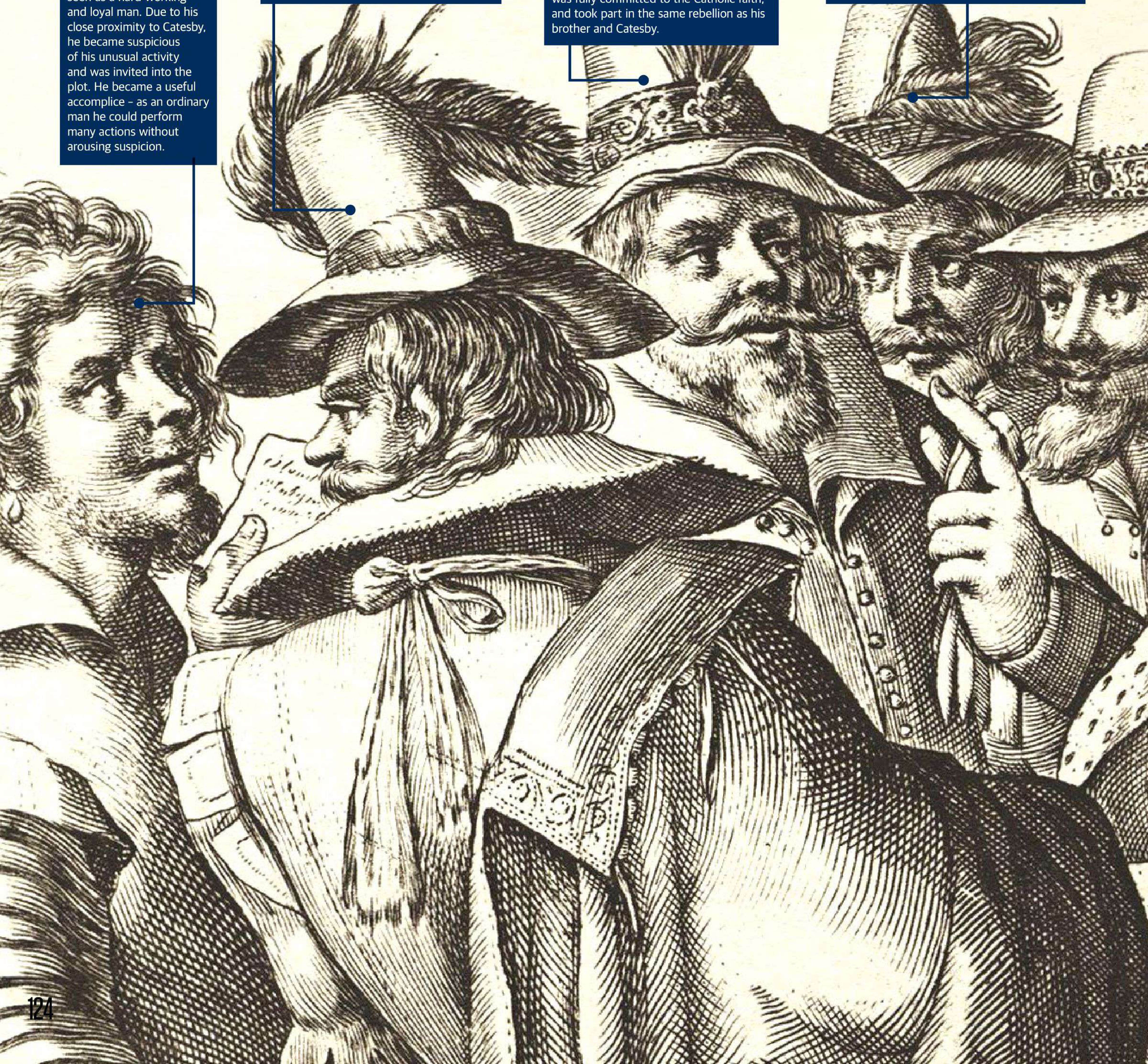
James II



William III

The conspirators

Each with his own motive for treason



Thomas Bates

1567-1606

Role: Catesby's servant

Born in Warwickshire, Bates was employed as Catesby's servant and was seen as a hard-working and loyal man. Due to his close proximity to Catesby, he became suspicious of his unusual activity and was invited into the plot. He became a useful accomplice – as an ordinary man he could perform many actions without arousing suspicion.

Robert Wintour

1568-1606

Role: Financial support

The oldest Wintour brother, Robert inherited the majority of his father's estate, including Huddington Court. Through marriage, Robert aligned himself to a strong Catholic family, and his home became a refuge for priests.

Christopher Wright

1570-1605

Role: Conspirator

The younger of the Wright brothers, Christopher was described as taller, fatter and fairer than John. A private and discreet man, since his conversion he was fully committed to the Catholic faith, and took part in the same rebellion as his brother and Catesby.

John Wright

1568-1605

Role: Original conspirator

The older of the two Wright brothers, John was a school friend of Guy Fawkes and was thrown in prison for taking part in rebellions. With a reputation as a brave, loyal and skilled swordsman, he converted to Catholicism and became associated with Catesby.

Thomas Percy

1560-1605

Role: Logistics

Percy had a reputation as a wild youth, having possibly abandoned his wife and killed a Scotsman in a skirmish. When Percy converted to Catholicism, it helped to calm some of his more rebellious ways, funnelling his fiery nature into bettering the Catholic cause in England.

Guy Fawkes

1570-1606

Role: Explosives expert

Born in York, Fawkes lost his father at a young age, and when his mother married a Catholic, he converted to the faith. He fought for Spain in the Eighty Years' War, and adopted the Italian form of his name 'Guido'. He was furiously opposed to James I, describing him and all of Scotland as heretics.

Robert Catesby

1573-1605

Role: Leader

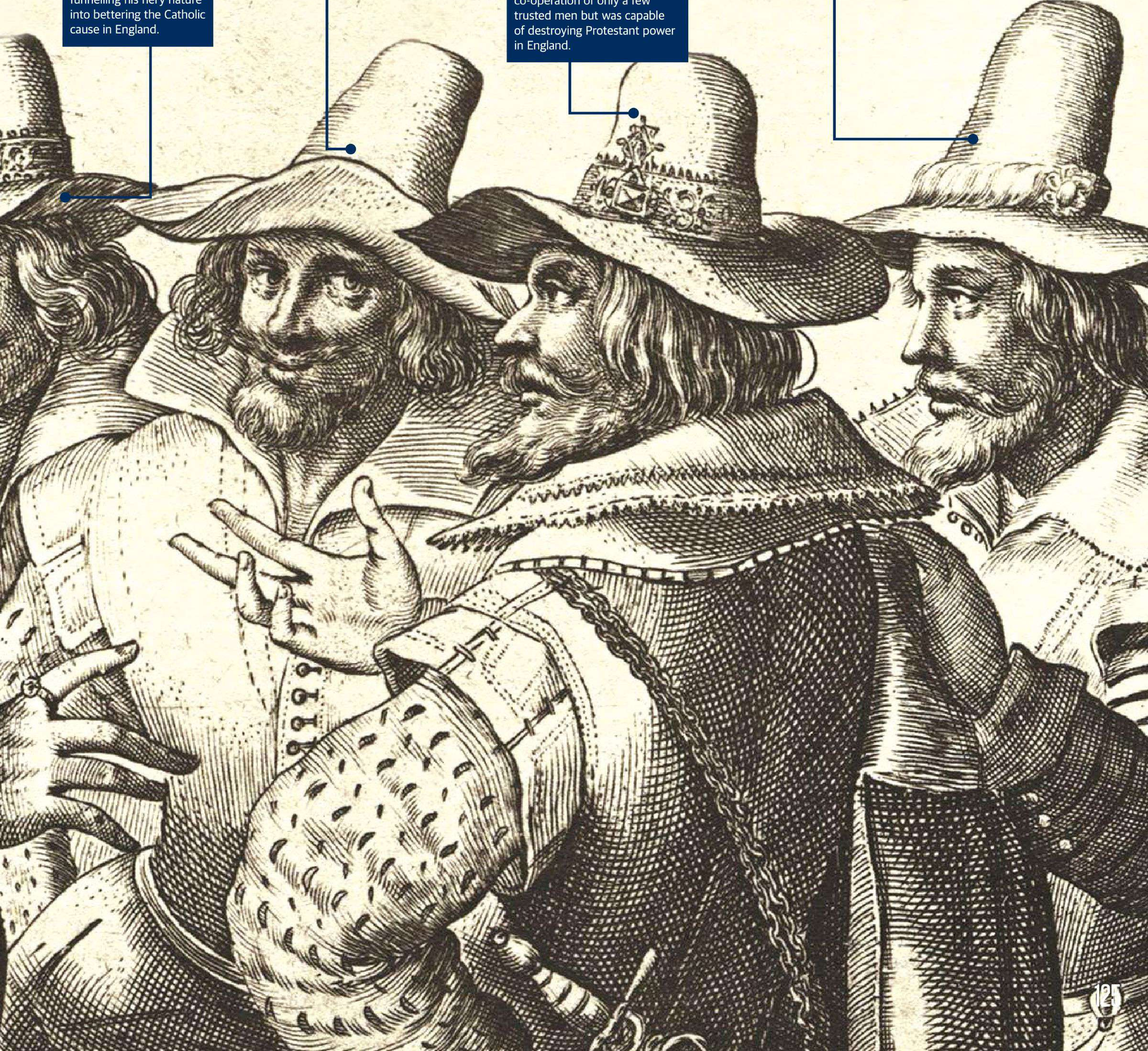
The only surviving son of Sir William Catesby, Robert Catesby gained a reputation as a Catholic sympathiser after taking part in a rebellion in hopes of usurping the queen. Desperate to reclaim Catholic power, Catesby concocted a plot that would require the co-operation of only a few trusted men but was capable of destroying Protestant power in England.

Thomas Wintour

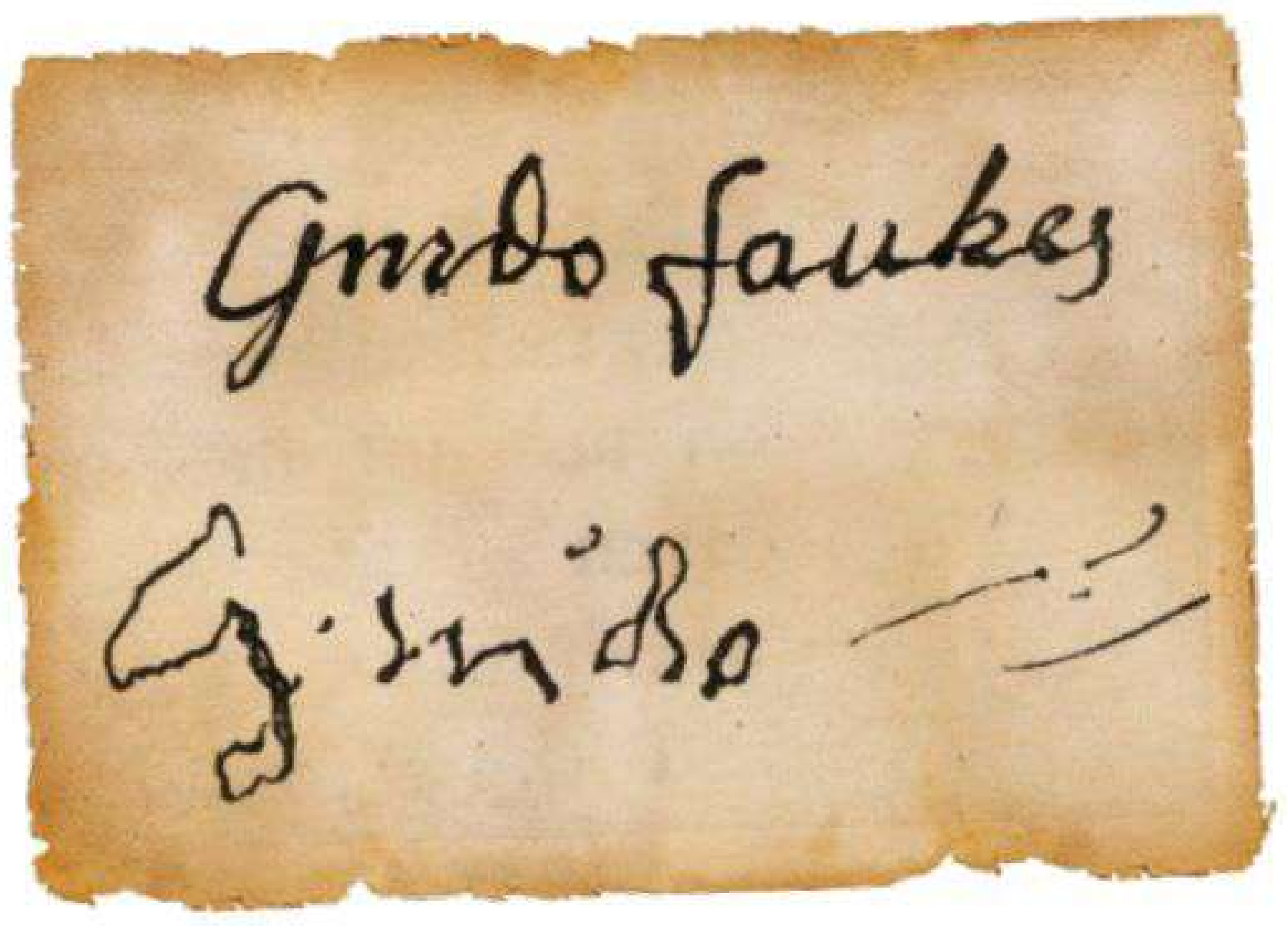
1571-1606

Role: Original co-conspirator

Thomas Wintour was intelligent, witty and well educated. He fought against Catholic Spain, but his views quickly changed and he became a faithful Catholic. Thomas travelled to Spain in an attempt to drum up support, also known as the Spanish treason, but his success was lacking and he was driven to other, more drastic methods.



Steadily, more and more men were drafted into the conspiracy, as it proved impossible for five men alone to handle such grand plans. Catesby's servant, Bates, became suspicious, and his master had no option but to recruit him. Robert Keyes, Robert Wintour, John Grant and Christopher Wright were also all inducted. Not only were they all passionate Catholics, but many possessed large fortunes and manor houses that would certainly aid the cause.


Guido fawkes

Guido

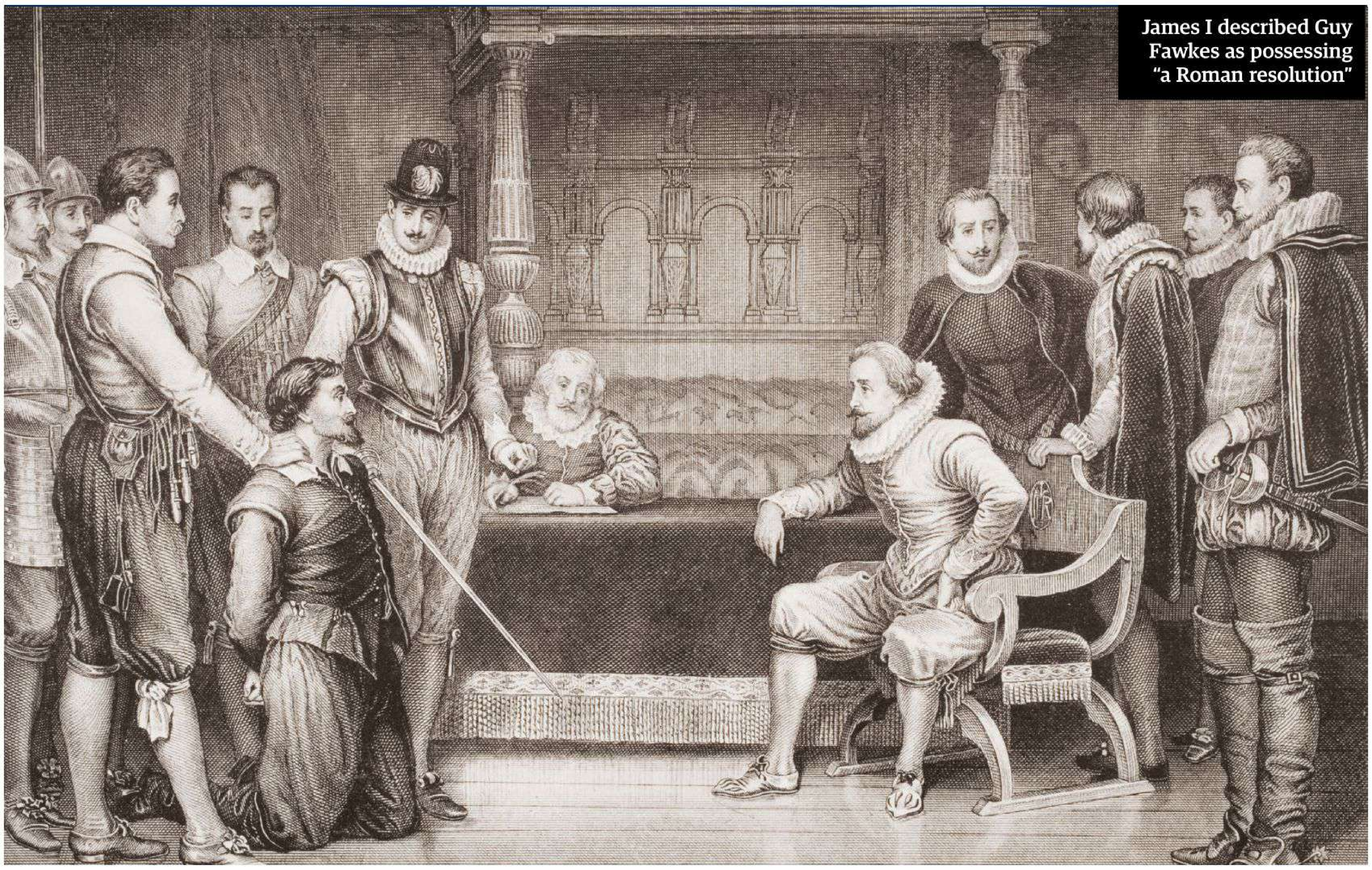
Guy Fawkes' signature before torture (top) and after (bottom)

Secretly, Catesby was worried. He wasn't a terrorist motivated by blind revenge, he was a moral and religious man, and he wanted to be sure that what he was doing was right. Struggling with his conscience, he repeatedly visited two priests, Father Henry Garnet and Oswald Tesimond. Catesby had no doubts that the king was guilty, but he worried about the innocent people who would inevitably be killed in the blast. He asked if this could be excused: was it okay to kill innocents for the greater good? Sworn to the law of confession, Garnet could tell no one of Catesby's plot, but he attempted to dissuade him.

Despite the priests' warnings, Catesby continued bringing gunpowder into the storage hold. He also began to make plans for the second part of their scheme. Eager to maintain some order after the king's death, he decided that James's child, Princess Elizabeth, would be put in place as his successor. At only eight years old he believed she could be moulded into the figurehead they desired. Elizabeth was also located not in London but in Coombe Abbey near Coventry. In order to make sure this final stage went off without a hitch, Catesby recruited his final three conspirators, Ambrose Rookwood, Everard Digby and Francis Tresham.

By October, everything was in place. Fawkes would remain in London and light the fuse, before escaping the city and travelling to Europe to drum up support. Meanwhile, in the subsequent madness, a revolt would break out in the Midlands and Elizabeth would be captured. Catesby seemed to have recovered from his earlier concern, but the same could not be said of his co-conspirators. A number of the men had friends in Parliament who were fellow Catholics. Late in the evening on 26 October, a letter arrived at the house of one of these fellow Catholics: Lord Monteagle, a man who had, in his youth, played a part in a fair number of Catholic plots himself. The contents of the letter were shocking. It warned him to abstain from attending Parliament on 5 November, as "they shall receive a terrible blow, this Parliament." Very aware of how serious this threat could be, Monteagle alerted the Earl of Salisbury.

News of the letter quickly found its way back to Catesby, and Tresham was immediately suspected, as Monteagle was his brother-in-law. Catesby and Thomas Wintour furiously confronted the new recruit, but Tresham was able to convince his fiery leader of his innocence. However, Catesby was unwilling to listen to Tresham's urges to abandon the


James I described Guy Fawkes as possessing "a Roman resolution"

The men at Holbeach House were stripped of their clothes and possessions before being taken to prison

Timeline

Evening, 4 November
Catesby, John Wright and Bates decide that the plot will go ahead, despite the discovery that a warning letter was sent to Monteagle, and begin setting out towards the Midlands.
Westminster

Night, 4 November
The king's men search the vaults under Parliament. They stumble upon Fawkes standing by a pile of wood, who informs them his name is John Johnson, and that he works for Thomas Percy.
Parliament vaults

Late night, 4 November
Under the king's orders, the men return to the vault and find Fawkes dressed ready for a getaway. He is immediately arrested, and taken to the king in the early hours of 5 November.
Parliament vaults

Morning, 5 November
Christopher Wright learns of the plot's discovery and rushes to the Duck and Drake Inn to inform Thomas Wintour. Wintour warns those still in London – Percy, Keyes and Rookwood.
Westminster

Midday, 5 November
Rookwood rides furiously for two hours and manages to catch up with Catesby and the others to warn them of the plot's failure and Fawkes' arrest. They decide to continue on to Dunchurch.
Near Milton Keynes

Evening, 5 November
The six fleeing conspirators meet up with Robert Wintour, then continue on and meet with Digby, who is accompanied by a hunting party. They continue west to Warwick.
Ashby St Ledgers

plot – he was too committed. Risks be damned, the plot would go ahead as planned.

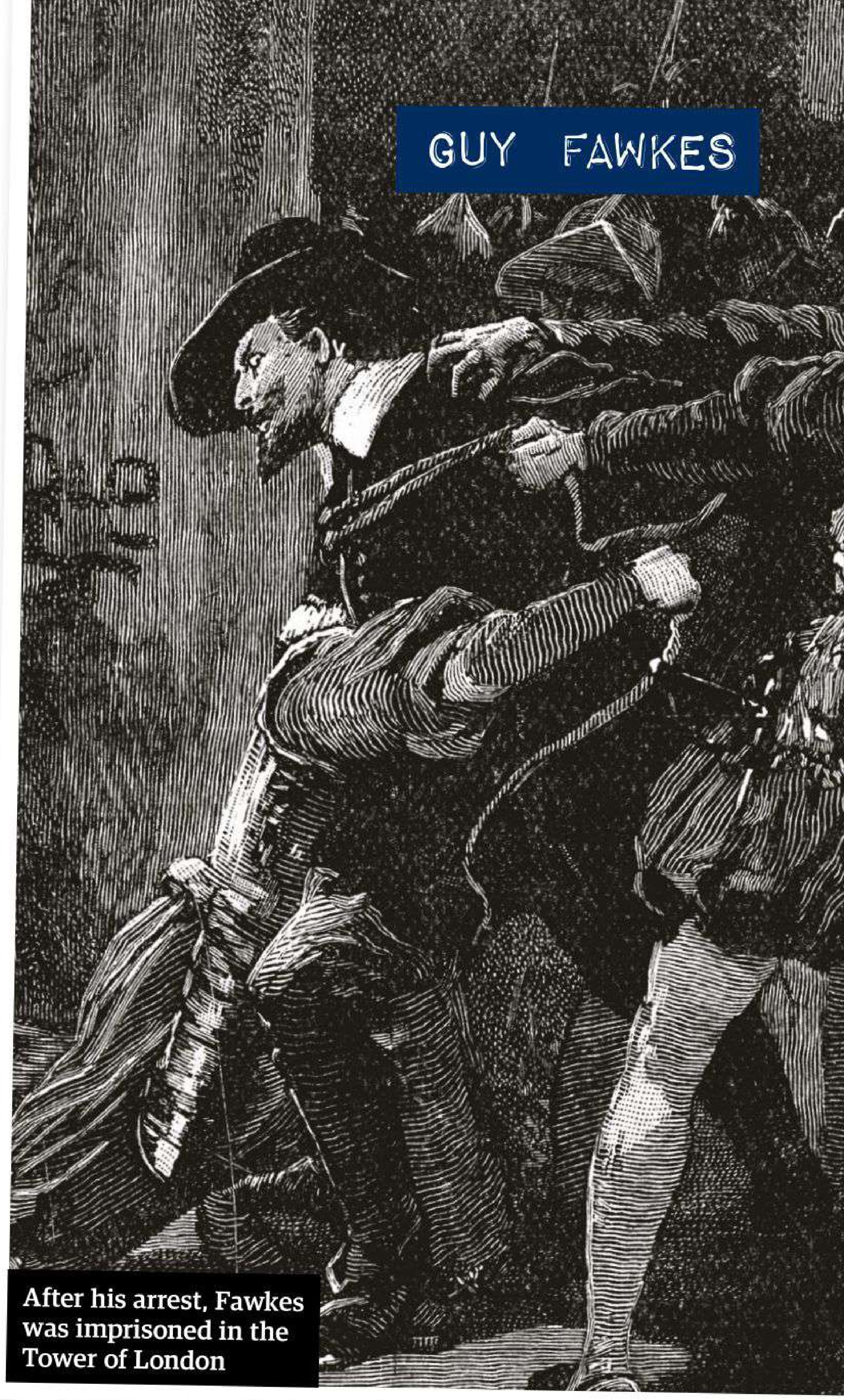
Meanwhile, the king had learned of the mysterious letter. Unlike many of his advisers, he took the warning very seriously. However, he decided to bide his time until the night in question, and see if the conspirators would carry out their alleged plot. When 4 November dawned, both the king and Catesby leapt into action. Catesby, with John Wright and Bates, left for the Midlands to launch the second part of the plan, while Fawkes prepared for his pivotal part.

The king was preparing too. James's men were searching all the buildings around Parliament for signs of anything suspicious. It was in the cellar during one of these searches that they stumbled upon Fawkes. Dressed as a serving man, he stood before a large, suspicious pile of firewood. He explained that he was a servant of Percy, though came across rather desperate. Apprehensive but not willing to upset him further, the men left to report their findings to the king. As soon as James heard Percy's name, he was suspicious, and ordered another search of the cellar.

When the men returned, Fawkes was still there. Dressed in his hat, cape and spurs, ready for a quick getaway, he was arrested and searched. Although he stuck to his story and insisted his name was John Johnson, they discovered matches and touchwood on his person. The king's men inspected the firewood and uncovered 36 barrels of gunpowder, enough to blow the houses of Parliament sky high.

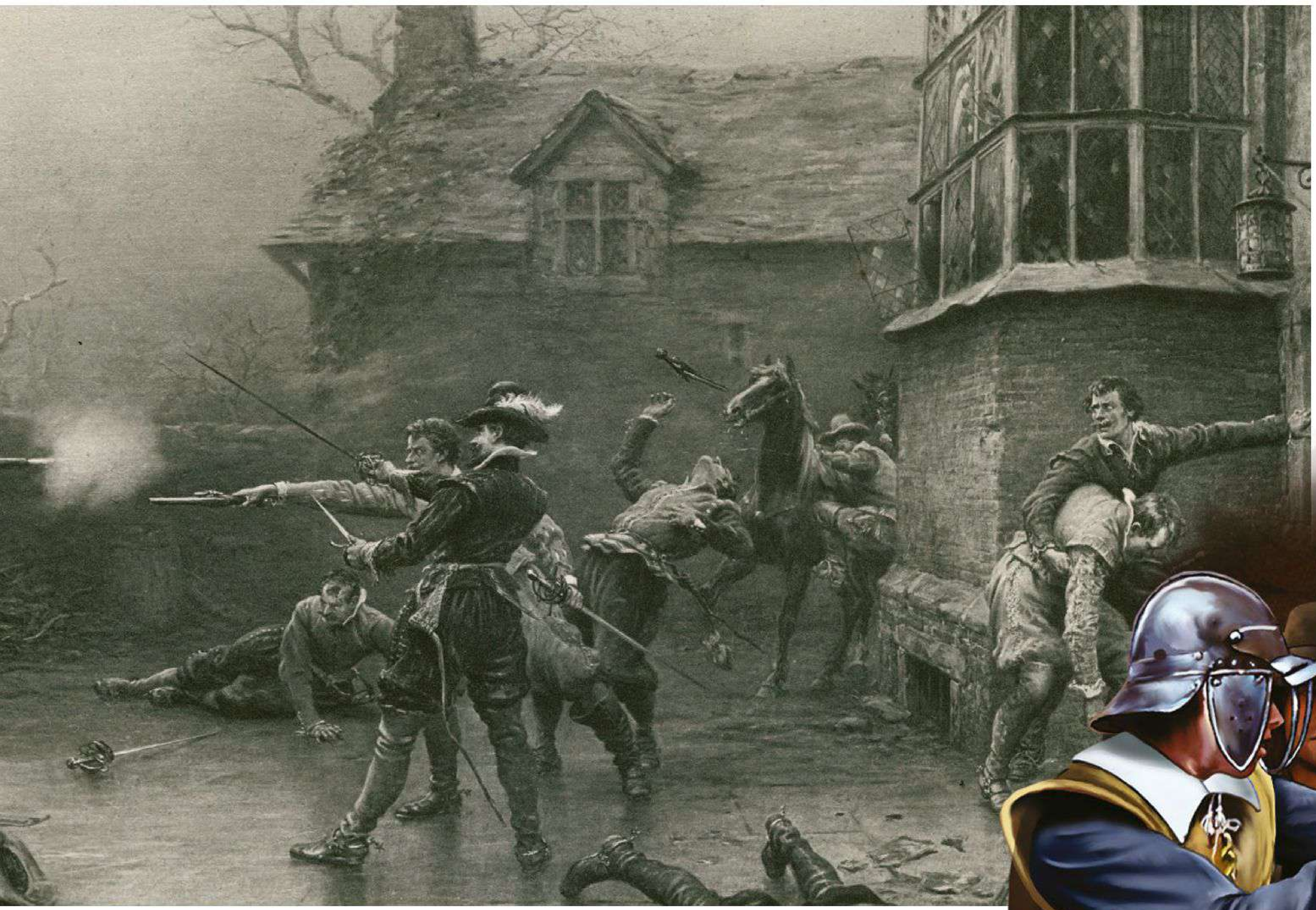
Everything now rested with Fawkes. The plot had failed, that much was obvious, but if he held out long enough, the lives of his friends could be saved. As Fawkes was questioned, he displayed remarkable courage in the face of almost certain death. He stuck by his story that he was indeed John Johnson. However, he did not for a moment deny his intentions, proclaiming that it was his plan to destroy the king and Parliament. When asked for the names of his accomplices, he was insistent he acted alone. James was impressed by Fawkes' resilience, but he needed names, and if torture would loosen his tongue, so be it.

News of Fawkes' arrest quickly spread to the other conspirators. The men who remained in London



After his arrest, Fawkes was imprisoned in the Tower of London

"Killing the king was a step too far; even his fellow Catholics had deserted him"



Morning, 6 November
Catesby and his men raid the castle for supplies, arming themselves for the fight they believe will follow, before continuing to Norbrook where they pick up more weapons.
Warwick Castle

Afternoon, 6 November
The conspirators arrive in Huddington and meet with Thomas Wintour. Despite Catesby's hopes, nobody is willing to ally with them, and they are forced to continue alone.
Huddington

Evening, 6 November
The Lord Chief Justice questions Rookwood's servants and uncovers the identity of several of the men involved, including Catesby, Rookwood and Wintour.
London

Evening, 6 November
With Guy Fawkes' resolve still holding, James permits the use of torture to loosen his tongue. He orders that 'gentler tortures' are used first
Tower of London

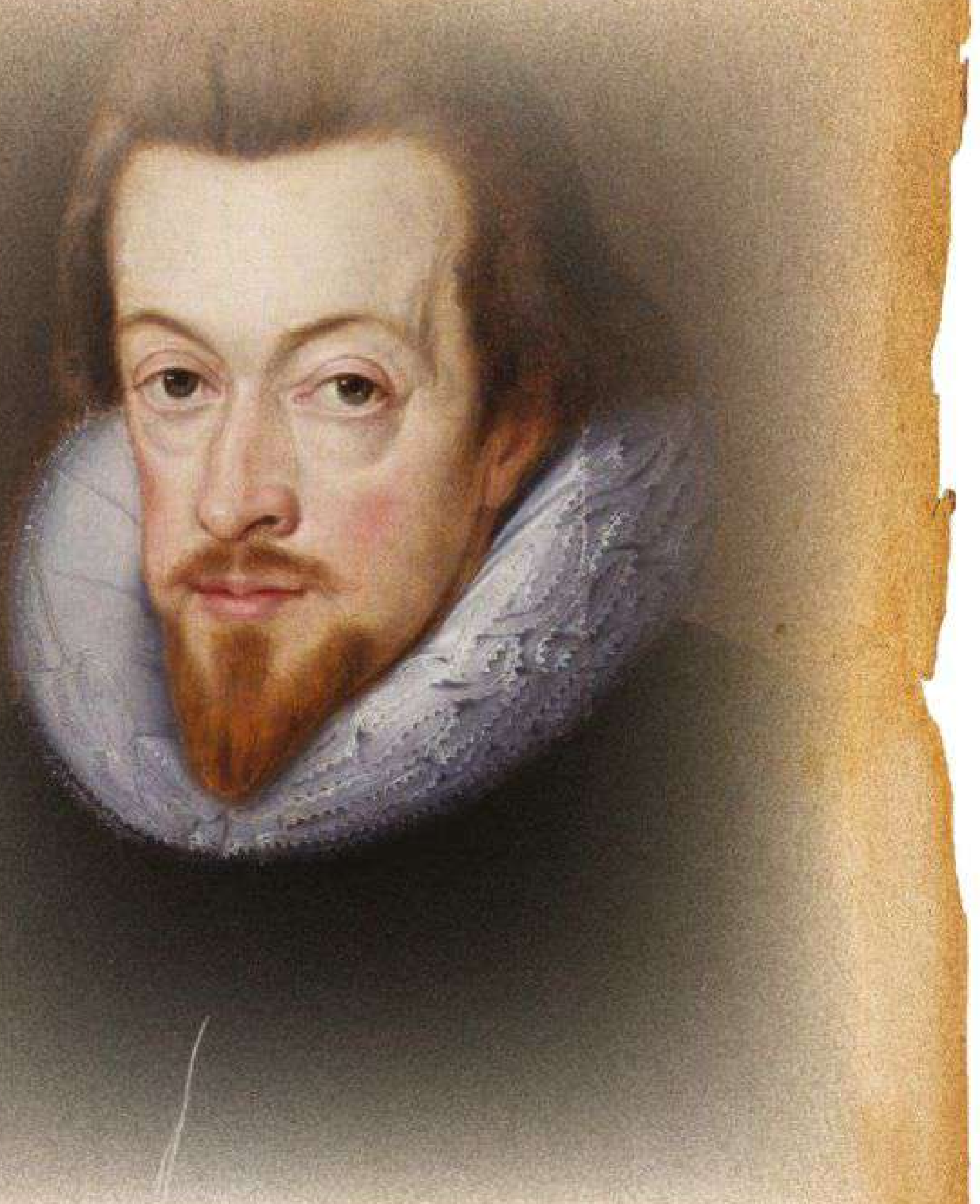
Night, 7 November
After enduring the horrors of the rack, Guy Fawkes finally confesses the details of the plot as well as the names of his fellow co-conspirators.
Tower of London

Night, 7 November
The fugitives arrive at Holbeach House. They spread out their damp gunpowder before a fire and many of them are set alight. Some of the men choose to leave.
Holbeach House

Morning, 8 November
200 men led by the Sheriff of Worcestershire besiege Holbeach House. In the gunfight, Catesby, Percy and the Wright brothers are killed. The others are arrested.
Holbeach House

The Gunpowder conspiracy

Was the plot really a state conspiracy?



The mystery Much of the suspicion surrounding the plot has involved, in some part, the role of the Earl of Salisbury. It was Salisbury who Monteagle alerted upon receiving the letter, and his peculiar actions have prompted many to ponder if he had more knowledge of the plot than he let on. First of all, he failed to immediately inform the king of the plot, who was out hunting and did not return for several days. Salisbury's involvement in the plot actually began before the letter even arrived, as he was aware that something was being planned. When the king did learn of the letter, Salisbury denied this knowledge completely, and allowed the king to take full credit. This may have been a clever political play, but perhaps it hints at more.

The motive The foiling of the plot benefited the king immensely. The feeling of goodwill towards the monarch encouraged Parliament to grant astonishingly high subsidies for the king, and the thanks for this lay at Salisbury's feat. An ambitious man, Salisbury expertly exploited the situation to garner favour with the monarch, and also allowed him to introduce more anti-Catholic legislation. Salisbury's anti-Catholic feelings far outstripped the monarch's, and he wished to rid England of the religion once and for all.

His involvement Conspiracy theorists summarise that Salisbury may have invented the entire plot himself, targeting known Catholic agitators and penning the letter to Monteagle. Others argue that instead of inventing it, Salisbury infiltrated the plot far earlier than the letter reveals, and simply allowed it to continue, knowing that he could use it later to fuel the fire of anti-Catholicism.

Evidence The ease in which the conspirators conducted the plot is the main evidence here. The fact that they were able to get 36 barrels of gunpowder in a country where gunpowder was strictly controlled by the government and store them under the Houses of Parliament would have been very difficult. However, the lack of any other evidence makes this conspiracy impossible to prove. If Salisbury invented the plot, it is unlikely all the men would have confessed to the crime, knowing that death would be the result. The more likely conclusion is that Salisbury was a quick thinking opportunist, who, upon uncovering the truth, exploited the situation for all that it was worth.

fled. Percy, aware that his name would be linked to the crime, proclaimed: "I am undone!" Rookwood, an exceptional rider, furiously rode in Catesby's direction to warn him. His incredible ride saw him travel around 30 miles in just two hours. He arrived breathlessly at Catesby's side and informed him of the plot's uncovering.

Catesby was crushed. He had poured everything into this revolution and was desperate to cling onto any hope he could find. He proclaimed that he could still gather enough support for an armed uprising. He knew enough resentful Catholics for an insurrection, and one way or another he would have his rebellion. The plotters could have left. There was enough time for them to flee England with their lives, but their commitment to their passionate leader and their belief in the cause was so great that they remained by his side.

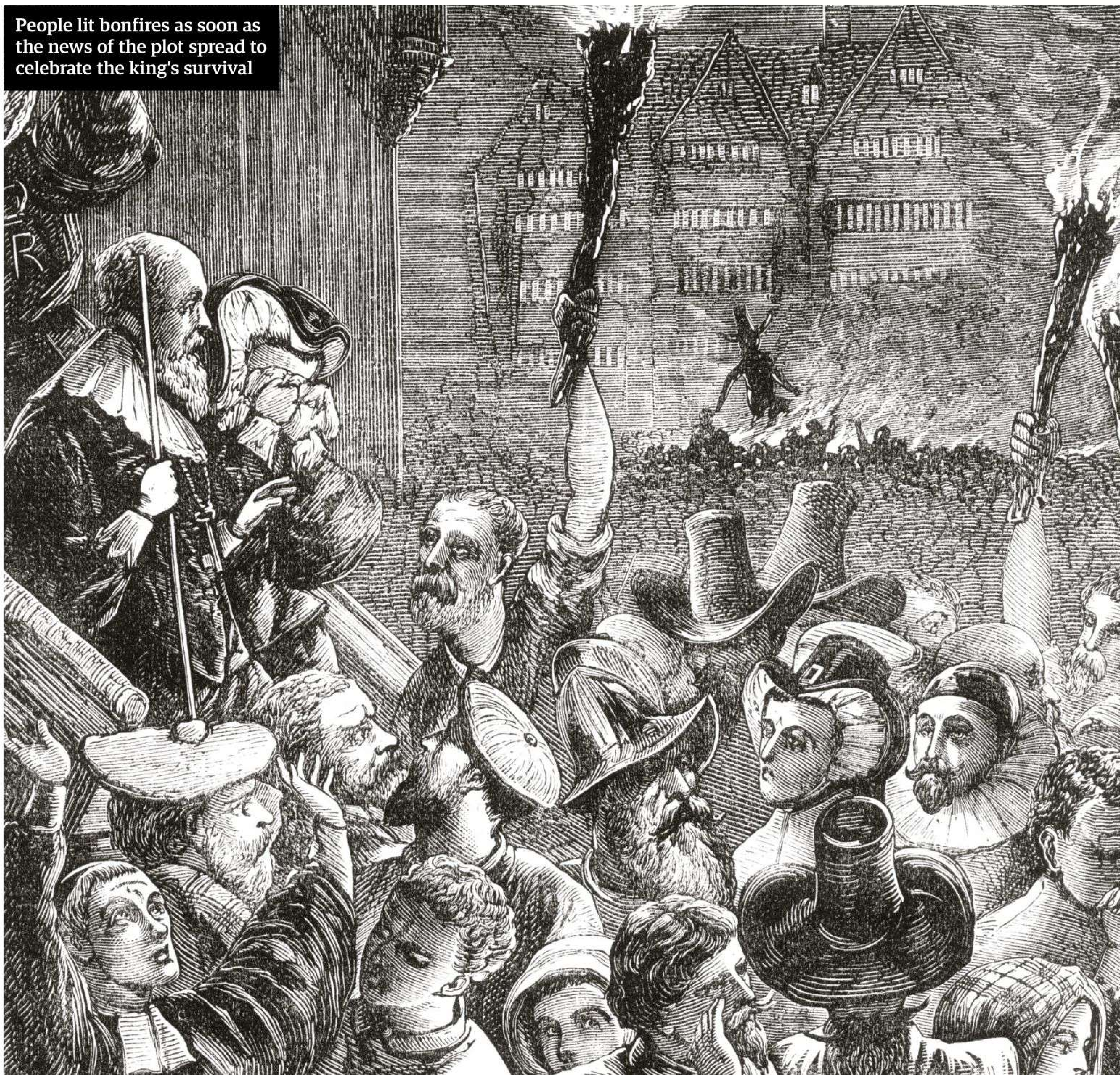
The men continued on to the Midlands, but the support Catesby had promised did not come. Word of the treasonous plot had spread rapidly through the country, faster than the men could travel, and even their friends and families turned them away. Catesby had fatally misjudged the situation. Killing the king was a step too far; even his fellow Catholics had deserted him. Wet, miserable and dejected, when the men finally reached their safe house of Holbeach House in Staffordshire, they spread out their gunpowder in front of a fire to dry it off. A spark ignited it, and engulfed Catesby, Rookwood and Grant in flames.

Meanwhile, in London, the king's men were steadily breaking Fawkes' resolve. He was placed upside down in manacles and hung from a wall, and most likely strapped to the rack, his limbs dislocated. By 7 November, what remained of Fawkes' resolve had crumbled. Broken and drained, he confessed the details of the plot and the names of his co-conspirators.

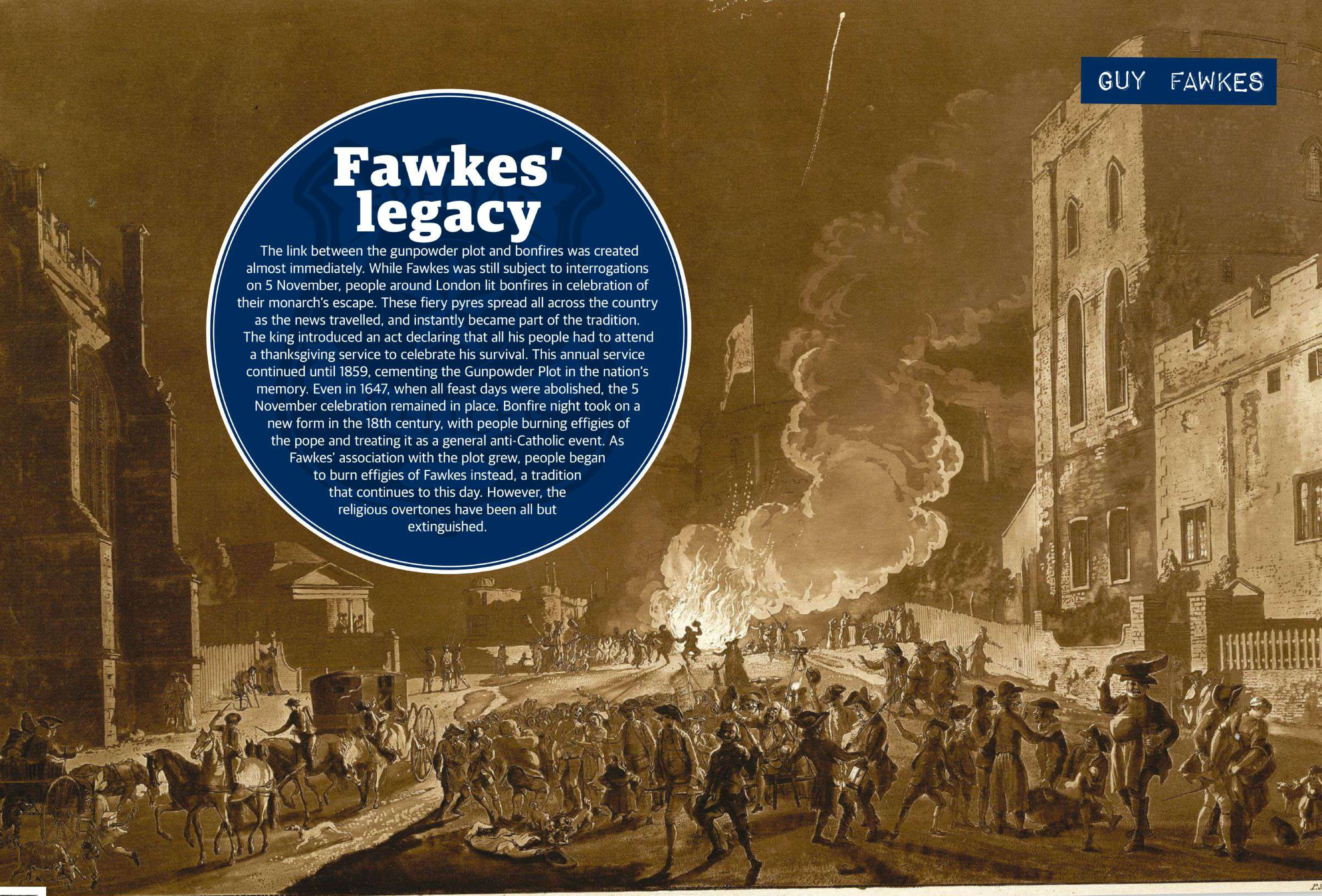
Catesby was alive, but for some the explosion was a grim sign and their commitment to their leader finally waned. Gradually, the team began to unravel. Digby headed for the authorities; Bates, Littleton and Robert Wintour also made their escape. Eventually, all who remained were Catesby, Percy, Wintour, the Wright brothers, a wounded Rookwood, and Grant, who had been blinded by the fire. Miserable and broken, when the 200 armed government men descended on the group on 8 November, the fugitives had no hope of mounting a defence.

The fight was brief: Wintour was shot first followed by the Wright brothers and Rookwood. Catesby and Percy managed to summon the last embers of their fiery zeal and made a final stand together at the door.

> "Before the trials even began, the verdict was a foregone conclusion"



People lit bonfires as soon as the news of the plot spread to celebrate the king's survival



Fawkes' legacy

The link between the gunpowder plot and bonfires was created almost immediately. While Fawkes was still subject to interrogations on 5 November, people around London lit bonfires in celebration of their monarch's escape. These fiery pyres spread all across the country as the news travelled, and instantly became part of the tradition. The king introduced an act declaring that all his people had to attend a thanksgiving service to celebrate his survival. This annual service continued until 1859, cementing the Gunpowder Plot in the nation's memory. Even in 1647, when all feast days were abolished, the 5 November celebration remained in place. Bonfire night took on a new form in the 18th century, with people burning effigies of the pope and treating it as a general anti-Catholic event. As Fawkes' association with the plot grew, people began to burn effigies of Fawkes instead, a tradition that continues to this day. However, the religious overtones have been all but extinguished.

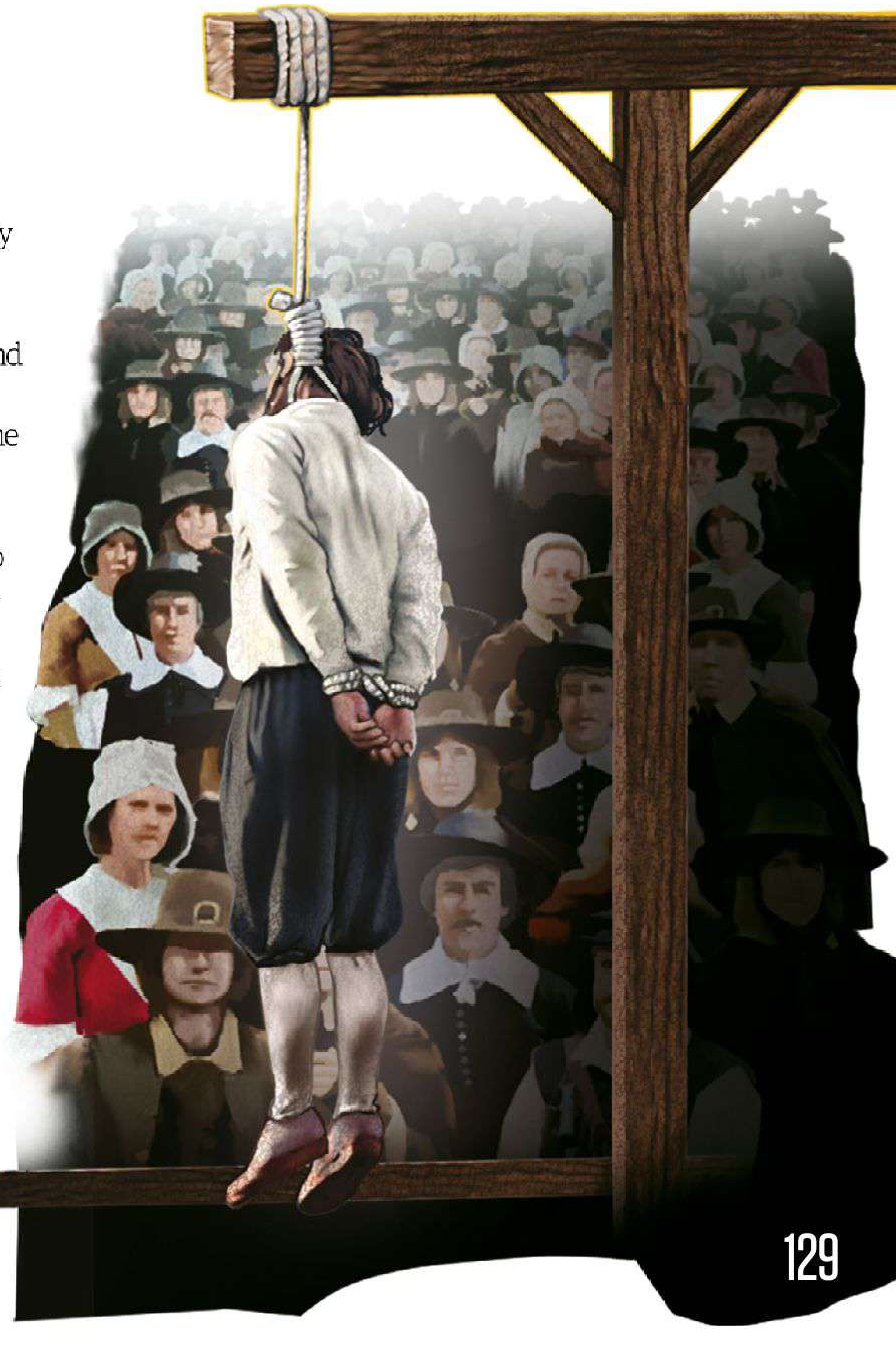
> "Guy Fawkes used his final ounce of strength to leap from the gallows and break his neck, dying instantly"

When they fell, it was as one, by a single bullet. On the edge of death and bleeding out, Catesby used his final ounce of strength to drag himself to a photo of the Virgin Mary, and cradling it in his arms, breathed his last.

The men who died at the house – Catesby, Percy and the Wright brothers – were lucky. Those who remained were rounded up, arrested and thrown in prison. Under threat of torture, all of the men admitted their involvement. Before the trials began, the verdict was a foregone conclusion. The men were paraded and jeered at by a furious audience. The conspirators had no defence, so could only utter their own pleas for mercy. Rookwood spoke for all the men when he said he was "neither actor nor author," and had acted out of blind devotion to their ringleader – Catesby, "whom he loved above any worldly man."

The people didn't care how charismatic their leader was. They wanted blood, and they were going to get it. The men were declared guilty of treason, and on a chilly 30 January, the first four faced their punishment. They were dragged through the street strapped to a wooden panel on the back of a horse. Then, the men were stripped down to their shirts and their heads placed in a noose. They were briefly hung, but cut down while still breathing so they could experience the pain of having their genitals cut off and burned before their eyes. The bowels and the heart were then removed, and the bodies cut into pieces and displayed for the birds to pick at. The bodies of Catesby and Percy were also decapitated, and their heads exhibited as a grim warning. Only one man, the final to face punishment, managed to escape the pain of castration and disembowelling – Guy Fawkes, broken and barely able to stand, used his final ounce of strength to leap from the gallows and break his neck, dying instantly.

The plan had been a disastrous failure, and the unearthing of such a dangerous Catholic plot that almost ended in tragedy did little to help the lives of Catholics in England. Although James was quick to make it clear that he did not blame all Catholics in his nation, strict laws against them were soon implemented. True Catholic emancipation would take a further 200 years, and the men who had schemed, fought and died for it would live on only in legend and rhyme.



Che Guevara

The remarkable and radical life of a qualified doctor, guerrilla fighter, and unflinching executioner in Cuba's Revolution who sought to export Marxist rebellion across Latin America

He'd had beer, probably plenty, but it was consumed in celebration rather than for courage. The day before, the Bolivian Army had been in a fierce firefight with communist guerrillas trapped in a mountainside gulley. The enemy had been routed and a few had been captured. But there had been dead on both sides, so when an officer called for an execution volunteer, Sergeant Mario Terán was more than ready to avenge his fallen Bolivian brothers. Beer was not going to affect his aim.

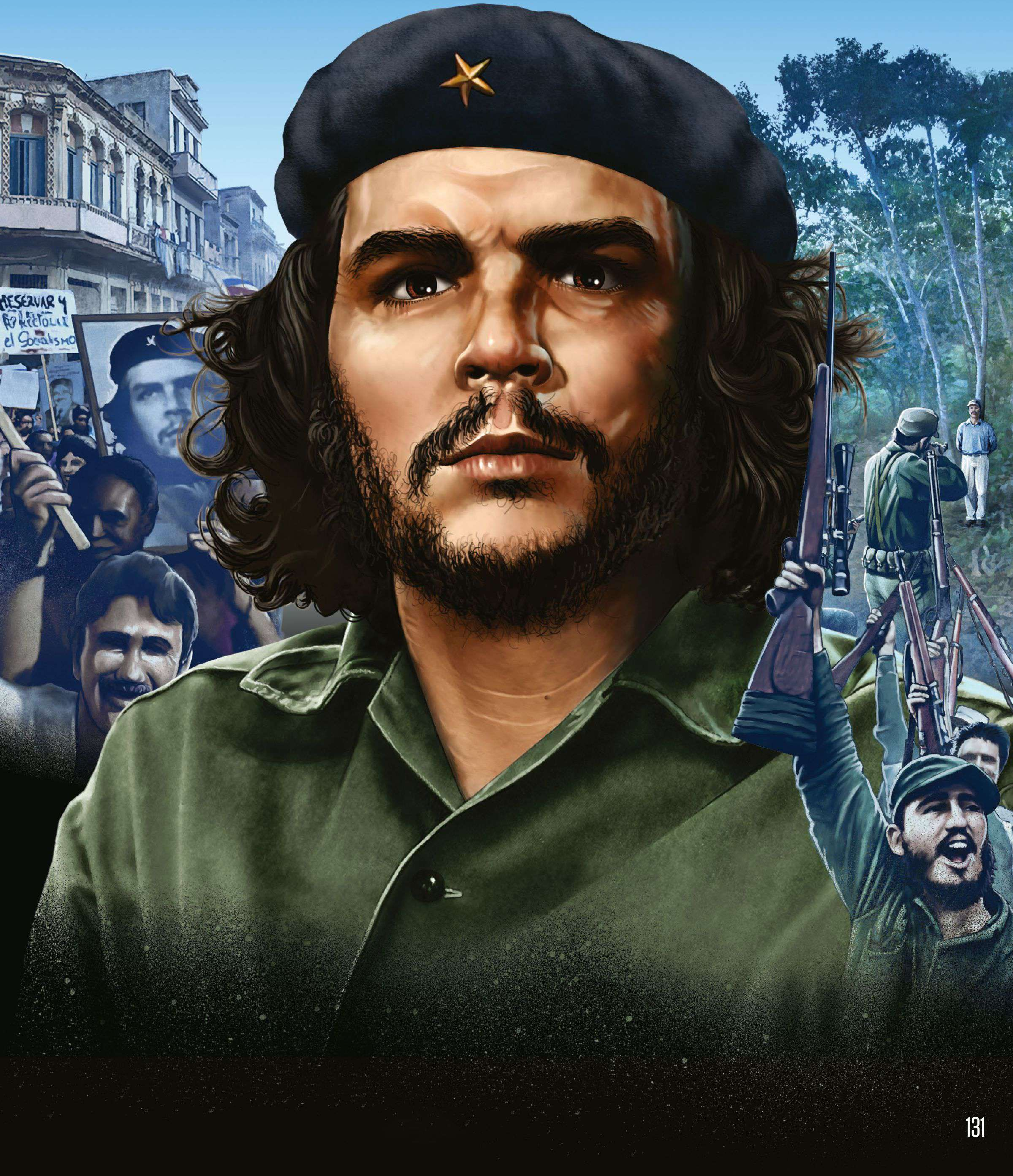
Terán stepped into the humble schoolhouse, the main prisoner's makeshift cell. The captive was filthy, his hair a tangled mess, his clothes torn and ragged. Rather than boots, he'd tied pieces of leather to his feet. Lying on the dirt ground, bleeding from a bullet hole in his leg, he was the very embodiment of the words 'wounded animal'. Terán raised his semi-automatic rifle.

Legend has it that the prisoner said: "I know you have come to kill me. Shoot, coward, you are only going to kill a man." Terán fired. He hit the captive's arms and legs, as he was supposed to make it look like the guerrilla had died in the firefight. As the man writhed on the ground, Terán fired again, fatally hitting his target's thorax. The prisoner's name was Che Guevara. The world's most feared Marxist revolutionary was dead.

> While some believe Guevara to be Cuban, he is actually of Argentine, Spanish and Irish descent

In 1928, 39 years earlier, Ernesto Guevara de la Serna was born in Rosario, Argentina - and his first brush with death was not far away. Severe breathing difficulties were diagnosed as asthma, and at times the choking attacks were so violent they were feared life-threatening. Often bed-ridden, young Ernesto had time to think, to contemplate his illness, to realise that his next breath, if he could catch it, might actually be his last. Startlingly early in life he became aware of his own mortality. By facing the proximity of death, and not fearing it, he refused to let the illness define him. Yet that live-in-the-moment outlook stayed with him - many years later, his fearlessness in the face of death led Fidel Castro to express surprise that he made it through the Cuban Revolution alive.

The Guevara family moved often during Ernesto's formative years, always searching for


ESERVAR Y
el Socialismo

an area of Argentina with a climate that might alleviate his condition. Eventually, they came to Alta Gracia, a small town at the foot of the Sierras Chicas in the province of Córdoba, where the dry mountain air offered their firstborn some relief. There, as siblings arrived and the family grew, they continued to move house, meaning the concept of settling, of putting down roots, was something Ernesto never really knew.

His parents were both well educated, coming from families that, while not rich, were far from poor. Due to his illness, Ernesto's schooling was initially intermittent, involving a lot of home tutoring from his mother. Later, as management of his asthma improved, so did his school attendance. He was considered an able, intelligent student, though not one overly interested in the school syllabus. Perhaps this was because in his teenage years he was reading widely and extensively, from political works to French classicists like Dumas and Zola and American authors like Steinbeck. He was also keen on chess and, despite his illness and scrawny physique, a tough and enthusiastic rugby player, even enlisting someone to run alongside him down the touchline with his inhaler if it was needed.

By 1947, Ernesto was eligible for conscripted military service, but he was exempted because of his asthma. It was the one time he was grateful for his feeble lungs as it allowed him to continue studying. He enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Buenos Aires, intent on becoming a doctor. Oddly, given this choice, his personal hygiene was notoriously poor. He rather delighted in being nicknamed El Chancho ('the Pig') due to his pungent body odour, just as he enjoyed wearing old, unfashionable or grubby clothes – as much for shock value as anything else.

Such idiosyncrasies would not bother someone who wished to travel, however, and this was something Ernesto was keen to do during university breaks. He first took off alone on a bicycle fitted with a small motor in 1950. As much a test of his own willpower to keep his illness at bay as the bike's hardiness, he travelled some 4,500 kilometres (2,800 miles) to the far north of Argentina. He kept a diary of his adventures, as he did on a subsequent trip he made with his friend Alberto Granado. That one began in January 1952, on a motorbike christened 'The Mighty One', even though it broke down numerous times and was eventually abandoned. The trip took the pair across Argentina to Chile, Peru, Columbia and Venezuela.

Ernesto went on further alone, visiting Miami in the United States and returning to Argentina in September 1952.

The diaries gave a clear indication of how the poverty and deprivation that Ernesto witnessed on his travels informed and shaped his world view. Prior to his journeys, even though he had read much political theory, he had not declared himself a supporter of any formal political doctrine. Yet witnessing the poor, the sick and the exploitation – often by companies from the United States – of the indigenous populations of Latin America had affected him deeply.

By October, Ernesto was back studying in Buenos Aires, working towards the exams he

THE ROAD FROM ERNESTO TO CHE

The journey that led to a sickly, far-from-poor Argentine youngster signing up to join a revolution in Cuba

14 June 1928
The first child of Ernesto Guevara-Lynch and Celia de la Serna, both from well-educated, well-heeled Argentine families, is named after his father. For distinction, he's referred to as Ernestito.

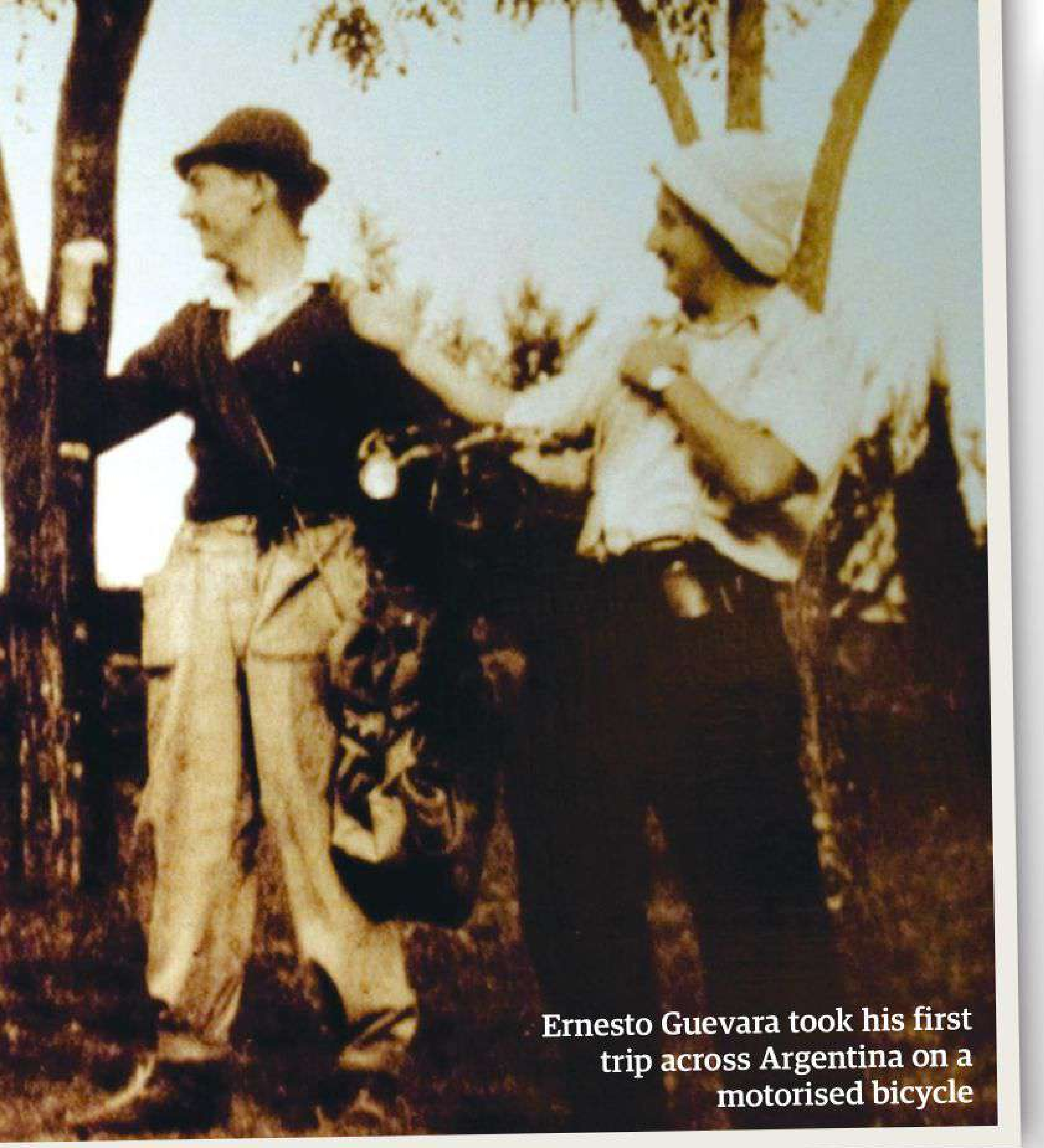
1930
The family return to Buenos Aires for the birth of their second child. There, Ernestito begins having breathing difficulties. The problem is eventually diagnosed as asthma – and it becomes chronic.

1942
Often forced to stay home through his illness, Ernestito reads voraciously. Management of his asthma steadily improves and he attends a good school in Córdoba, making friends with Tomás Granado.

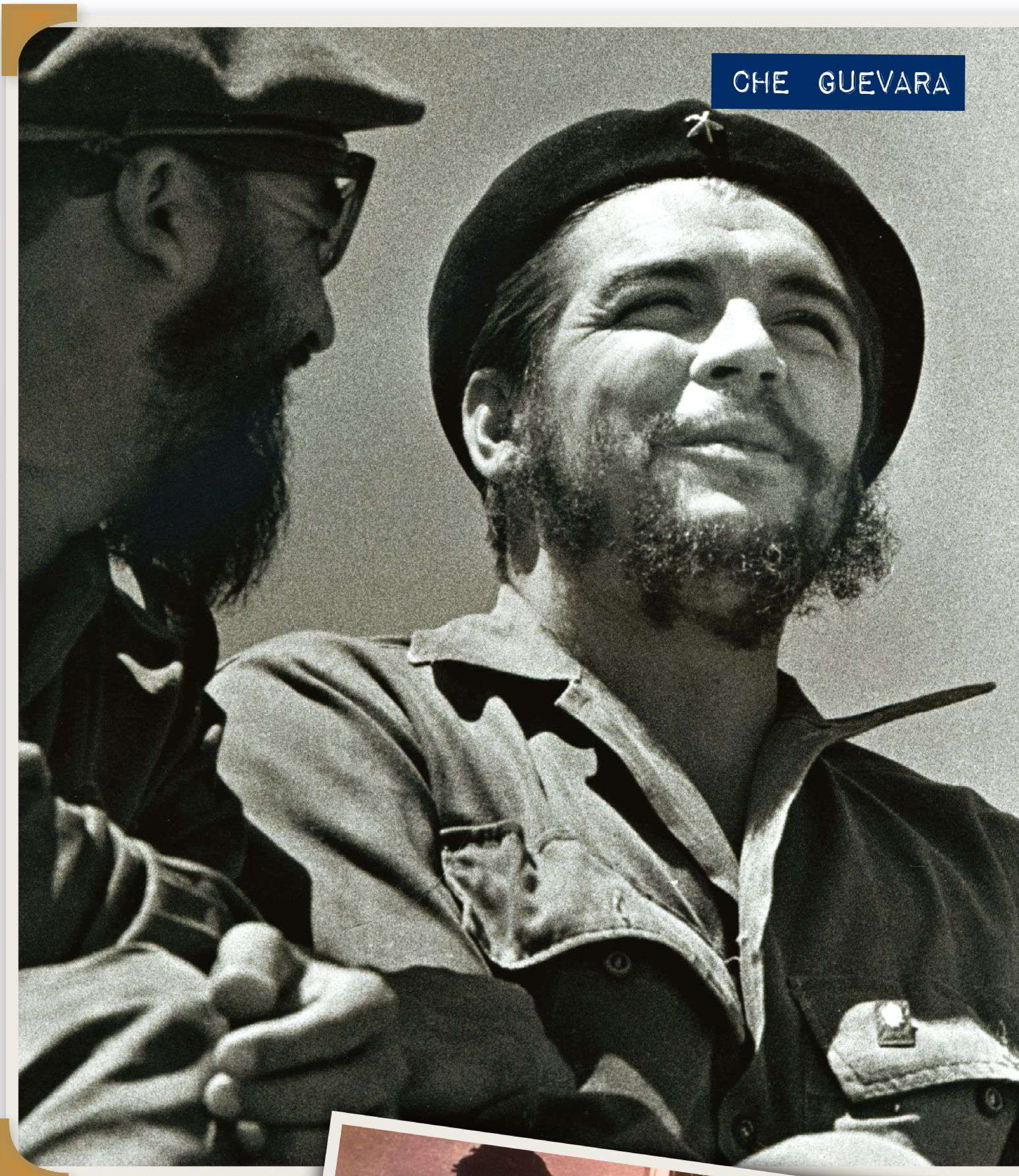
1943
Tomás's older brother Alberto runs a rugby team. The far-from-robust Ernestito nevertheless joins, plays fearlessly, and earns a new nickname from Alberto, 'Fuser', from part furibundo (furious), part Serna.

1947
Fuser and Alberto, a biochemistry student who is also widely read, become firm friends. After graduating from school, Fuser enrols to study medicine at Buenos Aires University, Argentina.

4 January 1952
During a break from their university studies, Fuser and Alberto begin an epic journey on motorbikes to truly discover their South American continent.



Ernesto Guevara took his first trip across Argentina on a motorised bicycle

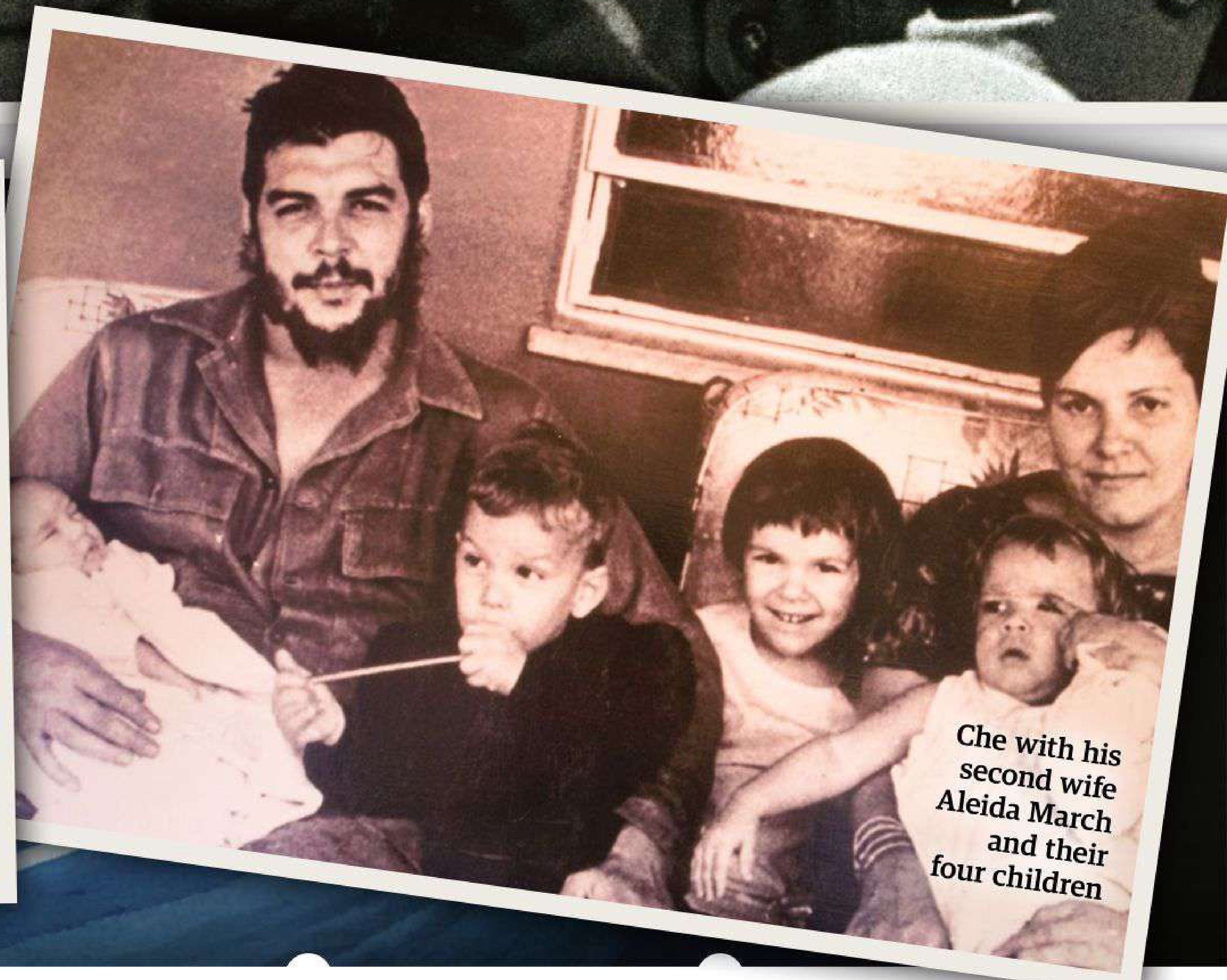


needed to pass his medical degree. He phoned home one day six months later, stressing that it was Doctor Guevara de la Serna speaking. Almost immediately after qualifying, Ernesto began planning another trip, this time with his friend Calica Ferrer. They set off on their journey on 7 July 1953, heading for Caracas in Venezuela, where Alberto was working.

During the trip the pair learned there were revolutionary changes taking place in Guatemala. Ernesto was intrigued. They were together in Ecuador when Calica received an offer to coach a football team in Quito. Ernesto was invited too, but he wanted to continue north, so they split up. They never saw each other again.

En route to Guatemala, Ernesto stopped in Costa Rica, where he met influential political thinkers such as Juan Bosch, who later became president of the Dominican Republic, and Rómulo Betancourt,

In his former home, now a museum dedicated to his life, the motorcycle on which Che travelled across South America is displayed



Che with his second wife Aleida March and their four children

11 February 1952
En route, the pair witness widespread poverty and medical deprivation. At a copper mine run by United States monopolies in Chile, they encounter ruthless exploitation of the indigenous population.

26 September 1952
After visiting Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, and meeting the likes of Dr Hugo Pesce, an influential Marxist scientist, Fuser returns to university in Buenos Aires to complete his medical degree.

24 December 1953
The now qualified Dr Guevara de la Serna has begun another trip. After hearing of revolutionary social reforms taking place in Guatemala, he arrives in Guatemala City.

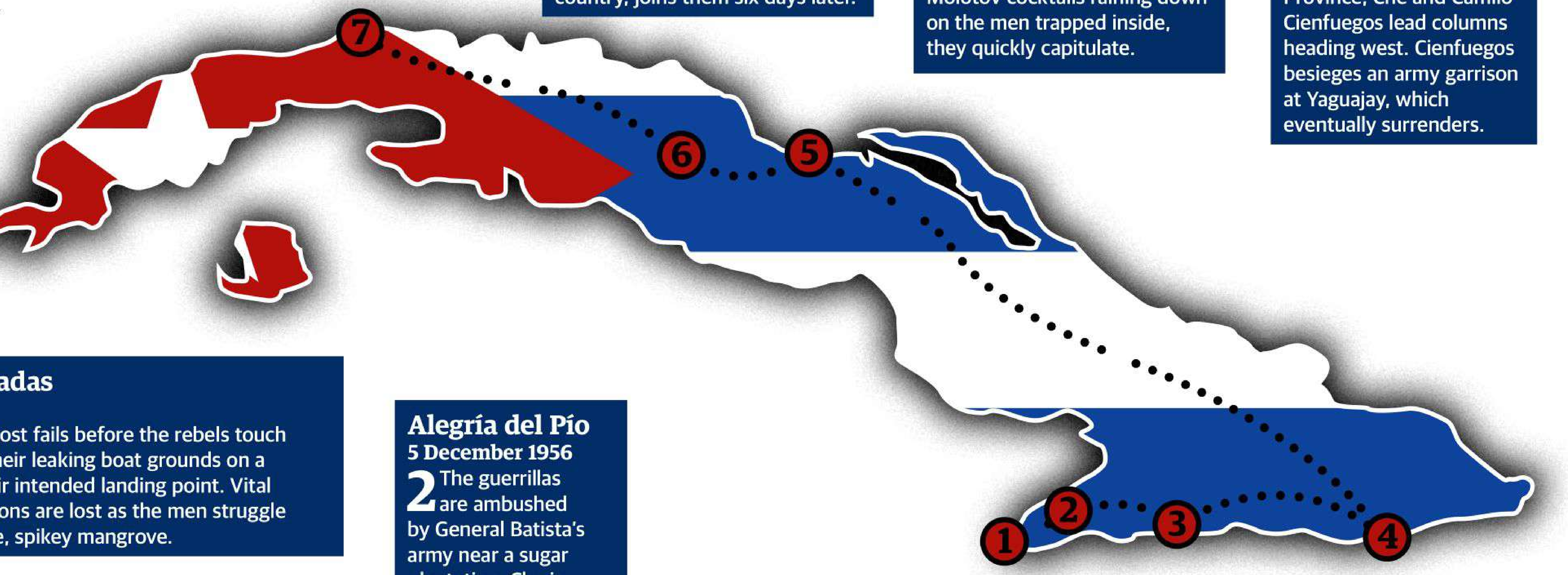
31 December 1953
Dr Guevara meets Hilda Gadea. She has a wide circle of friends and at a New Year's Eve party, he meets a group of Cuban exiles from a failed attack on the Moncada Barracks.

1954
The Cubans call him Che, from his Argentine manner of speaking. Che witnesses the fall of the Guatemala regime first hand and notes the mistakes that its leaders had made.

1955
Fidel Castro, the Cuban exiles' leader, arrives in Mexico. He meets an Argentine doctor, they talk all night, and Fidel's planned revolution gains a new recruit – Che Guevara.

Taking Cuba

From a shipwreck to mountain hideouts, the guerilla fighters had a perilous journey to the capital



Playa Las Coloradas

2 December 1956

1 The revolution almost fails before the rebels touch Cuban soil when their leaking boat grounds on a sandbar, far from their intended landing point. Vital equipment and weapons are lost as the men struggle ashore through dense, spikey mangrove.

Alegría del Pío

5 December 1956

2 The guerrillas are ambushed by General Batista's army near a sugar plantation. Che is wounded, others killed, others still captured and executed. The survivors scatter. In the thick-forested, sparsely populated mountains of the Sierra Maestra, they gradually regroup.

Sierra Maestra

17 February 1957

3 A *New York Times* reporter, Herbert Matthews, visits their camp and writes about the impressive mountain guerrillas – even though he's tricked into thinking there are far more men than there actually are. Inspired, underground groups begin forming across Cuba.

La Plata

11-21 July 1958

4 Continuously recruiting and training locals, the rebels harass the army. Batista launches an offensive against them, but it goes disastrously wrong at La Plata. 500 soldiers are killed, wounded or captured by Castro's vastly outnumbered force.

Yaguajay

19-30 December 1958

5 The rebels sweep down from the Sierra Maestra on a counter offensive. While Castro's division battles for control of the Oriente Province, Che and Camilo Cienfuegos lead columns heading west. Cienfuegos besieges an army garrison at Yaguajay, which eventually surrenders.

Santa Clara

31 December 1958

6 Batista sends an armoured train with hundreds of men and weapons to help defend Santa Clara. Che's force ambushes it after using tractors to rip up the tracks. With Molotov cocktails raining down on the men trapped inside, they quickly capitulate.

Havana

2 January 1959

7 Within hours of Santa Clara's fall, Batista flees the country. Che and Cienfuegos push on to Havana and take control of the city without opposition. Castro, on a victory march up the country, joins them six days later.

a future president of Venezuela. Ernesto's political awareness couldn't fail to grow.

And in Guatemala, it mushroomed. First he met Hilda Gadea, a left-wing exile from Peru. Ernesto was a strikingly handsome man and, despite his shabby clothes and lax washing habits, he'd had numerous lovers. Hilda, though no Latin beauty, was as well-read as Ernesto, and they struck up a deep relationship. Her social circle included many exiles from other Latin American countries under right-wing military dictatorships. Included in those that Ernesto met were several Cubans who had escaped the island after a failed attack on a barracks. Their leader, still imprisoned in Cuba, was Fidel Castro.

Guatemala had become a haven for political exiles because its government, under President Jacobo Arbenz, was instigating sweeping social reforms including land rights, education and suffrage. This angered American interests, particularly the United Fruit Company. By the spring of 1954, there were strong rumours that rebels, who were backed by the CIA, were planning to overthrow the president. When planes began bombing raids in the summer, the rumours were confirmed.

Ernesto confessed in letters sent back home that he found the raids thrilling, feeling "...a magic sensation of invulnerability."

He joined a medical unit to help as the fighting intensified, telling everyone who would listen that Arbenz should arm the population to allow them to defend their revolution. As it happened, perhaps under pressure from his military, perhaps attempting to avoid bloodshed, the president resigned, allowing the rebels to take power. Soon, everyone connected with the previous regime, or suspected of communist leanings, were being rounded up. Hilda was arrested. Ernesto took refuge in the Argentine embassy.

He was there a month before being allowed passage to Mexico while Hilda, released from prison after a few days, later joined him. By now, Ernesto's political beliefs were crystallising. He was viewing the region of South America as a whole, believing its various indigenous populations were being exploited and kept in poverty by colonialist corporations largely from the United States. Those populations needed to drive out their abusers from the north, then defend their new freedoms, violently if necessary. He was still unsure, though, if he should attach himself to a particular cause or continue travelling on to Europe – until, in the summer of 1955, he met Fidel Castro.

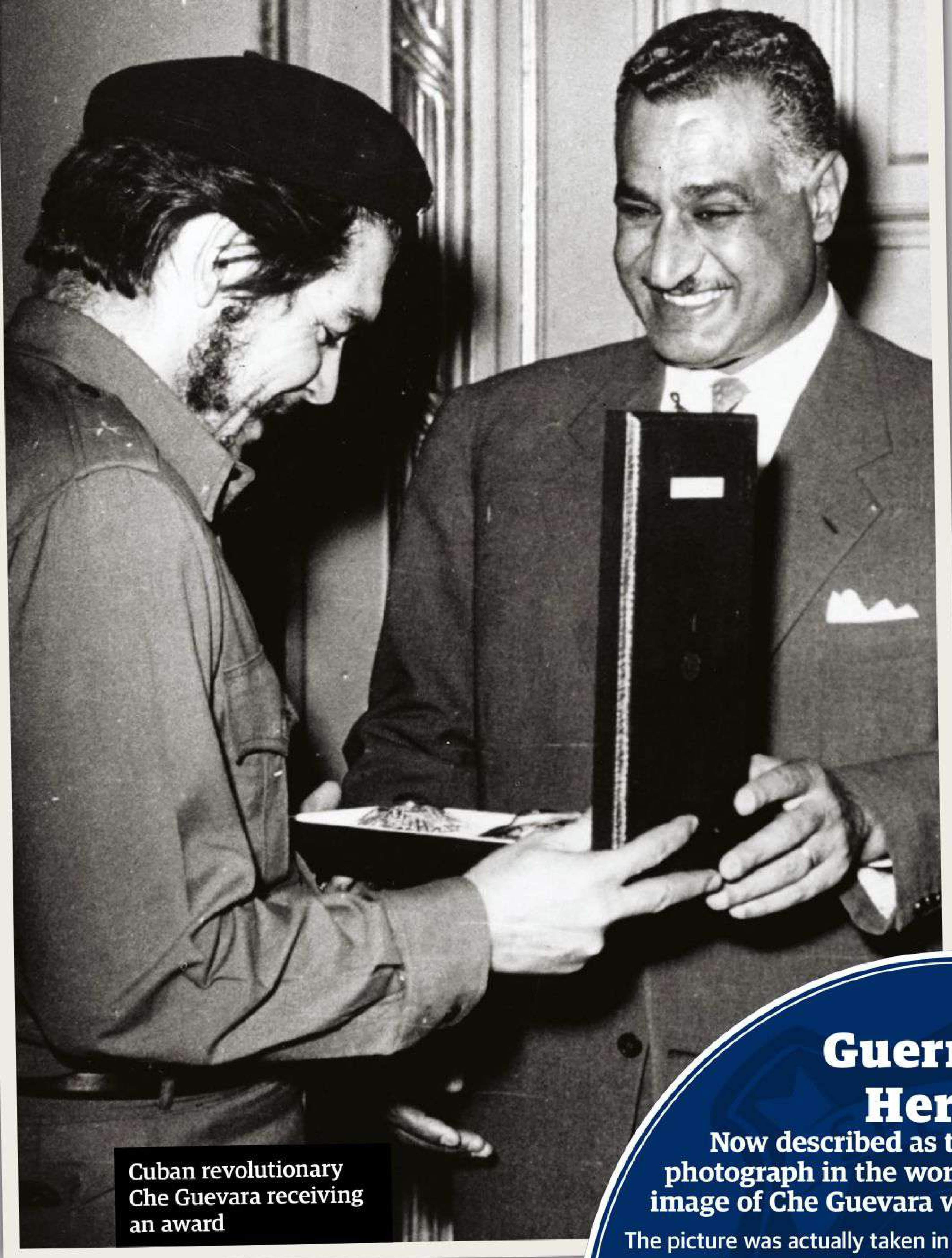
Several of the Cuban exiles that Hilda and Ernesto had encountered in Guatemala had gone to Mexico too. Fidel and his brother Raul had been granted an amnesty in Cuba. When they joined their fellow exiles in Mexico, the paths of the Castro brothers and Ernesto crossed. At length, Fidel outlined his plan to land a small guerrilla force by boat on Cuba to begin a revolution there. Won over by the charismatic leader, he agreed to join the rebel invasion.

Shortly after, Hilda became pregnant and the pair married, but none of that lessened his commitment to the cause. Nicknamed 'Che' by the Cubans – because he used that Argentine word roughly meaning 'mate' or 'pal' in much of his speech – Hilda's husband was principally the group's medic. Yet Che took part in all aspects of military training, eager to prove himself. He was declared "the best guerrilla of them all" by Alberto Bayo, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War who was instructing them.

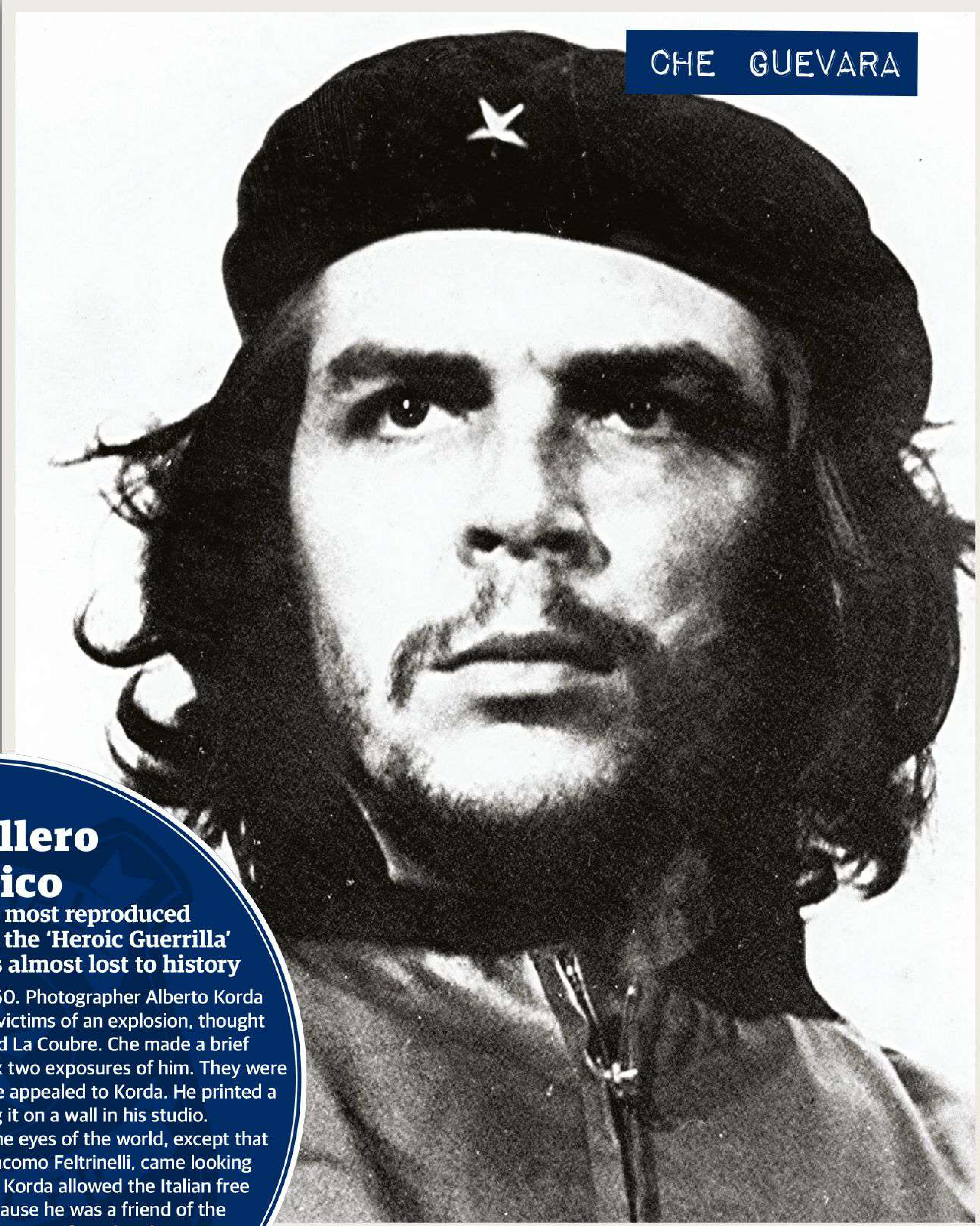
A force of 82 men squeezed on board a motor launch called Granma when it left Mexico on 25 November 1956. The craft had seen better days. Laden with weapons and equipment, and battling against heavy weather, it took seven days to reach Cuba. Once there, the launch hit a sandbar off the coast. The men had to carry what they could ashore, wading through dense mangrove and thorny bushes. "It was a shipwreck rather than a landing," Che wrote later. Worse, the group quickly came under attack from the Cuban army.

In another brush with death, Che was shot in the neck. Losing a lot of blood, he thought he was going to die, but was pulled to relative safety by the other fighters. In the chaos and confusion, many of the men were killed, others captured and executed. Those that remained alive were scattered across the region.

Slowly, the surviving guerrillas found each other and hid out in the Sierra Maestra mountains. Their



Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara receiving an award

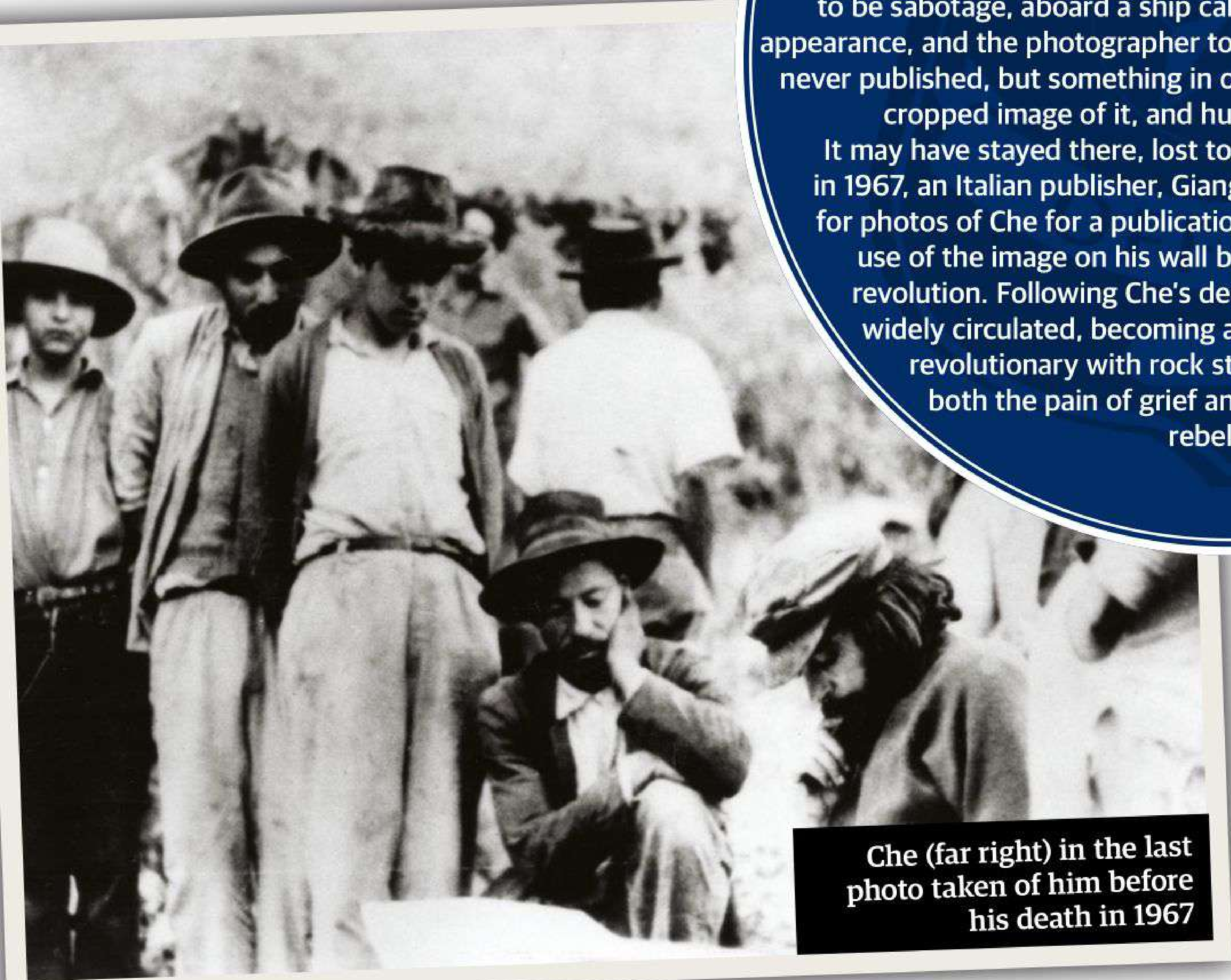


Guerrillero Heroico

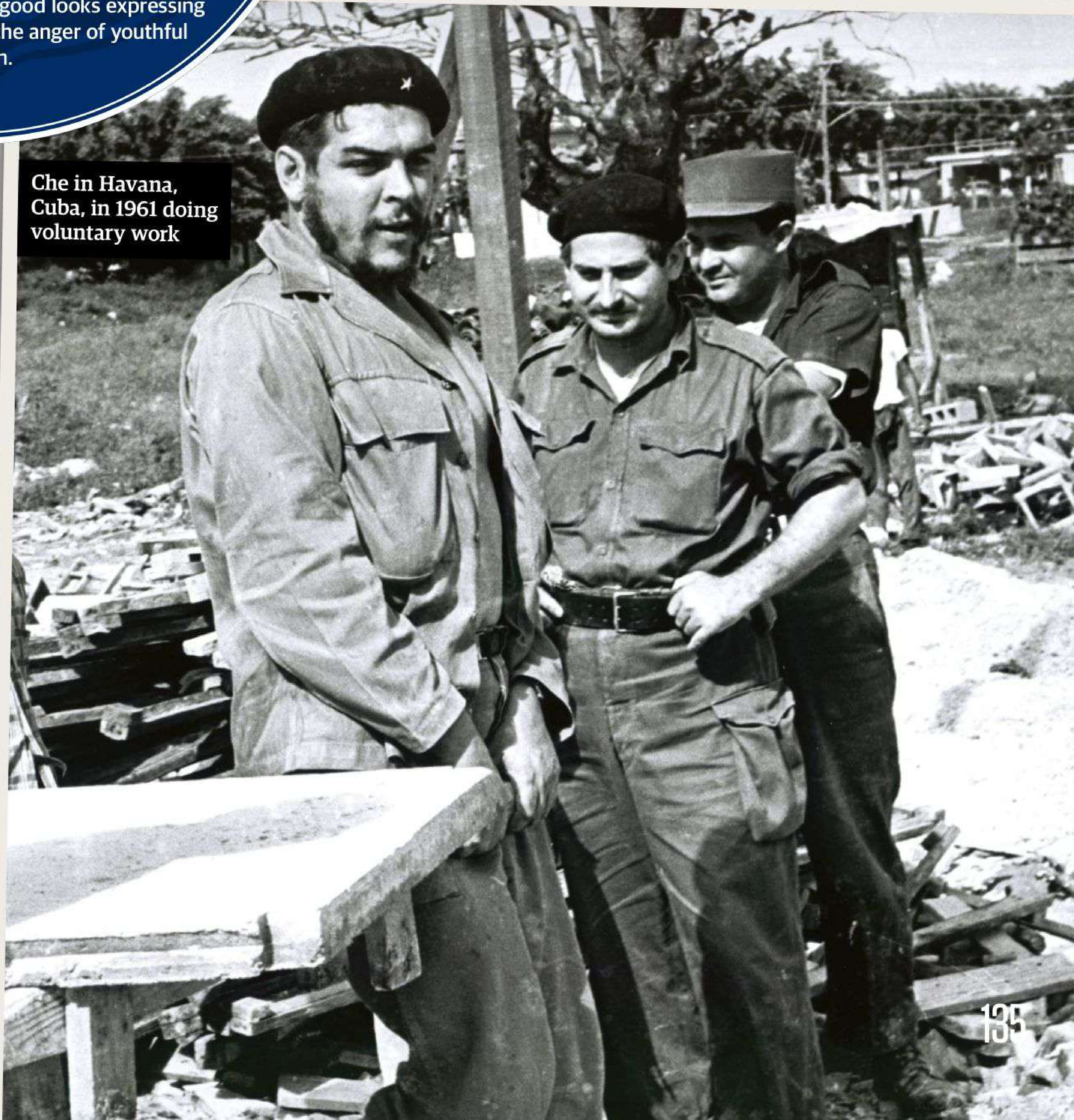
Now described as the most reproduced photograph in the world, the 'Heroic Guerrilla' image of Che Guevara was almost lost to history

The picture was actually taken in 1960. Photographer Alberto Korda was covering a memorial service for victims of an explosion, thought to be sabotage, aboard a ship called La Coubre. Che made a brief appearance, and the photographer took two exposures of him. They were never published, but something in one appealed to Korda. He printed a cropped image of it, and hung it on a wall in his studio.

It may have stayed there, lost to the eyes of the world, except that in 1967, an Italian publisher, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, came looking for photos of Che for a publication. Korda allowed the Italian free use of the image on his wall because he was a friend of the revolution. Following Che's death soon after, the photo was widely circulated, becoming a zeitgeist icon – an executed revolutionary with rock star good looks expressing both the pain of grief and the anger of youthful rebellion.



Che (far right) in the last photo taken of him before his death in 1967



Che in Havana, Cuba, in 1961 doing voluntary work

ONE MAN'S FREEDOM FIGHTER IS ANOTHER MAN'S TERRORIST

Weighing up the good against the bad of Che Guevara – a man of extremes

GOOD

The root of the problem

Journeying through Latin America, Che observed for himself the problems faced by the vast majority of the region's people. His analysis that this was caused by colonialism and exploitation, largely by corporations of the United States, was devastatingly accurate.

Education, education, education

The local recruits joining the rebels in Sierra Maestra were often illiterate. Che organised classes to teach them to read and write. Subsequently, the literacy campaign in Cuba that began after the revolution was one of his favourite initiatives.

Medic!

As a doctor, Che treated leprosy victims in Peru, people injured during the overthrow of Guatemala's government, rebels under Castro's command, the local population in the Sierra Maestra – and even wounded Batista soldiers after a raid on the El Uvero garrison.

A revolution of the self

Che developed and lived by the concept of the New Man as the way to true socialism. The New Man didn't work for material goods, but had a selfless moral duty to work for society, which in turn nurtured him and his family.

Unshakeable integrity

Many men have ideals, few will die for them as Che did. He lived by the words he wrote to his children in a final letter, wanting them to feel deeply any injustice committed against any person anywhere in the world.

BAD

Revolutionary justice

Numbers are disputed, but certainly hundreds were executed at Che's La Cabaña tribunals. The final decision was his, and he didn't let political or humanitarian pleas affect it. To Che, enemies of the revolution had no place in the new Cuba.

The enemy in the north

The dislike and distrust that Che felt for the United States as colonialist exploiters ran very deep. It can be compared to the hatred developed by Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and other religious fundamentalist terrorist groups.

Cuban missiles

To protect the revolution, even nuclear Armageddon wasn't out of the question. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, Che informed reporter Sam Russell that, fearing invasion, had the missiles been under Cuban control, they would have launched them against the United States.

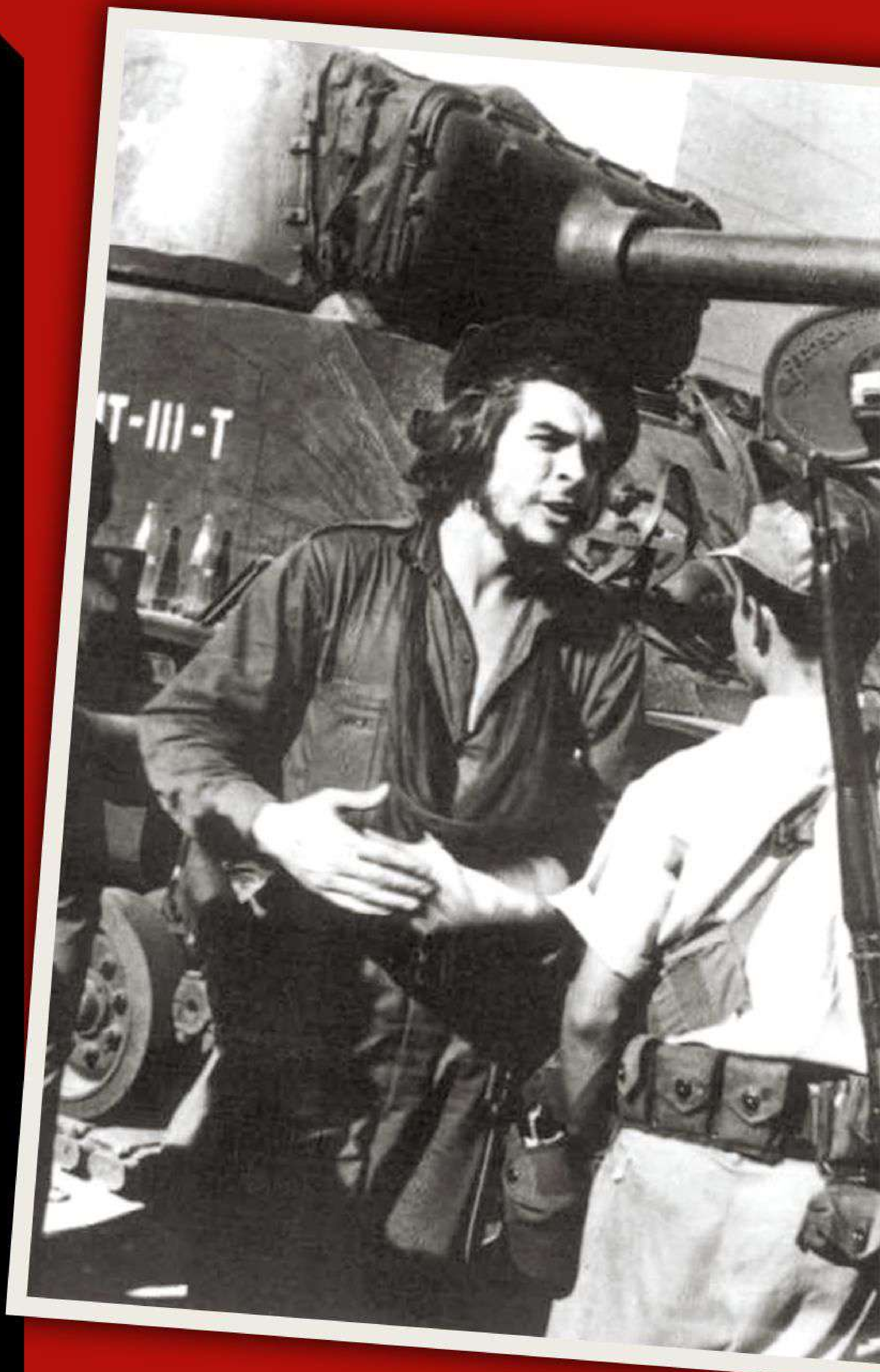
Executioner

Castro had ordered the execution of Eutimio Guerra, who had betrayed the rebels' movements to the army. Dispassionately, Che stepped forward and put a bullet into the spy's brain, later detailing the incident in his diary with chilling detachment.

Warmonger

As a Marxist, Che was an enemy of democracy. His advocacy of guerrilla warfare, in his own words calling for "two, three… many Vietnams," led untold numbers of young, idealistic Latin Americans to lose their lives in futile rebellions.

HASTA LA VICTORIA
SIEMPRE



Cubans wave photos of Guevara during an event to mark the 50th anniversary of his death

exact number is disputed but it was less than 25. Over time, with the help of sympathetic locals and other Cubans keen to end Batista's hated regime, the rebels acquired recruits and weapons. Che became masterful at organising hit-and-run attacks against the army, inflicting damage then fading back into the countryside before any counter-attacks. His work impressed Fidel, who gave him command of a second force.

Che organised his men to help locals learn to read and write while offering medical care himself. He was a stern disciplinarian, but as an excellent strategist who invariably led from the front, morale within his group was high. His men were always ready to lay down their lives for their leader and their cause.

After a failed offensive by Batista's army, the guerrillas struck out across the country. Fidel's force headed towards Santiago, Cuba's second city, while Che's group went towards Santa Clara. The battle for Santa Clara proved decisive. Just hours after the city fell to the rebels, Batista fled the country. Che's men marched on Havana and took the capital unopposed. It had taken just over two years for guerrillas numbering little more than 20 at one point to claim the country.

Next, they had to keep it. Che was put in charge of La Cabaña prison, where revolutionary justice was swiftly and ruthlessly administered to Batista's torturers and war criminals, to traitors, and to enemies of the revolution. Defendants were allowed witnesses and lawyers, but there were no juries. Che selected judges and reviewed numerous cases with them, though as chief prosecutor, his decision was final. Hundreds were executed by firing squad on his order. The lack of firmness he'd witnessed first-hand in Guatemala was not going to be repeated.

He was equally uncompromising in his private life. When Hilda arrived in Cuba with their three-year-old daughter, Che bluntly informed her that he had fallen in love with Aleida March, who had fought alongside him. Che and Hilda divorced quickly. He married Aleida, and had four more children with her.

However, neither they nor Cuba, where he was granted citizenship, could fully capture his heart. Che's over-riding commitment, now that he had successfully fought one, was to revolution.

After holding various government posts over several years, Che wrote a "farewell letter" that Fidel revealed to the Cuban people in October 1965. In it, Che declared his intention to leave the country to fight for the revolutionary cause abroad. By that time, he was already in Africa, working with elite Cuban fighters training Marxist rebels in the Congo.

It was thought that the guerrilla tactics used successfully in Cuba could be repeated to bring about a communist state in central Africa. However, Che found the rebels to be poorly disciplined and badly led. They also encountered fierce opposition from South African mercenaries flown in to aid the Congo National Army. Suffering from dysentery and, inevitably, acute asthma attacks, Che was forced to abandon the mission.

To recover, he lived incognito in Dar es Salaam and Prague. He made a final secret visit to Cuba to see his family and Fidel, then, shaving off his beard and most of his hair in order to pose as an unremarkable Uruguayan businessman, he flew to Bolivia.

In the rural south east of the country, he met up with a group of about 50 guerrillas. They had some initial success in skirmishes with what was thought to be a poorly trained and equipped Bolivian army. Yet the local population steadfastly refused to rise up and join them in revolution, and their opponents were in fact being aided by the CIA and US Special Forces. Quickly picked off by their opponents, the guerrilla numbers dwindled while the net around them tightened.

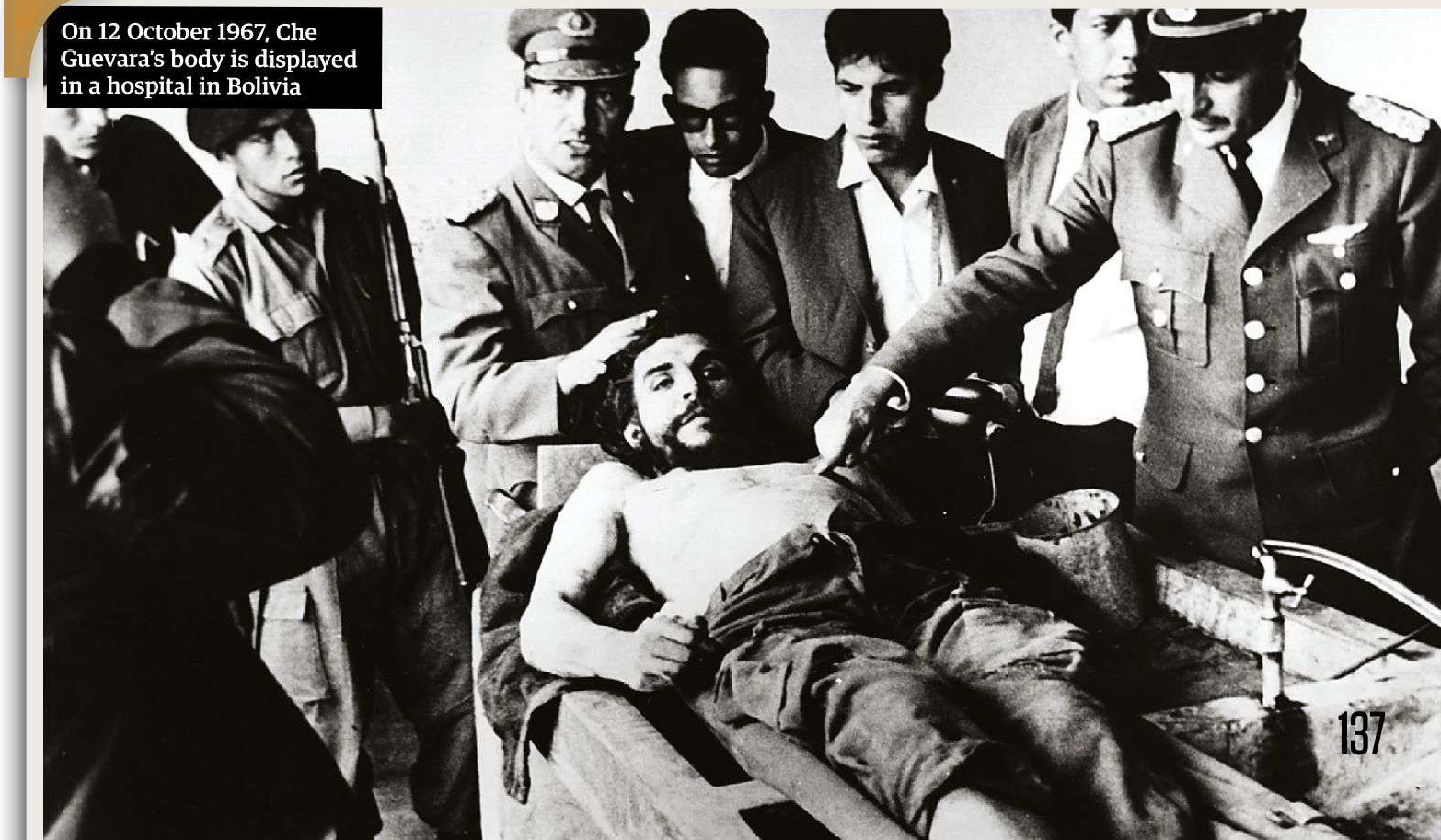
In October 1967, with morale low and his men fatigued, Che's group were near the village of La Higuera. The Bolivian Army trapped them in a ravine, and the firefight that led to Che's capture began. It was his final brush with death.

Che's final hours
7, 8, 9 October 1967

The Bolivia campaign has gone badly. The peasants refuse to rise up. Che has 16 men left...

- Exhausted, hungry and in some cases sick, the ragtag gang of guerrillas led by Che are in a steep, jungle-clad ravine near a small village, La Higuera.
- They encounter a peasant woman herding goats. They ask if she has seen soldiers but get no clear answer. They give her some money, hoping she won't reveal their position.
- A company of Bolivian army rangers receive information that there are guerrillas nearby. They sweep into the area, taking up positions on both sides of the ravine.
- The rangers are spotted. Che divides his men into three, the likelihood being that they'll have to shoot their way out. They hold their fire and positions for several tense hours.
- Just after 1pm some guerrillas are detected. A fierce firefight begins. Che's M-2 carbine rifle is hit in the barrel, rendering it useless. His pistol is empty.
- Che is shot in the leg. As rangers close in he reportedly yells: "Don't shoot! I am Che Guevara. I am worth more to you alive than dead!"
- The captured Che, unable to walk, is carried away from the area to a one-room schoolhouse at La Higuera. Bound hand and foot, he is held overnight.
- Félix Rodríguez, a CIA operative working with the Bolivians, arrives early next morning. He is startled by Che's bedraggled appearance. They talk and Rodríguez has a photo taken with him.
- Despite the United States hoping to keep Che alive, the Bolivian government orders his execution. Rodríguez informs Che of his fate. Sergeant Terán volunteers for the task. Che is killed.
- His hands are amputated and chemically preserved for identification purposes. He is buried with other guerrillas in a mass grave. Years later it is discovered. Che's remains are now in Cuba.

© Alamy


On 12 October 1967, Che Guevara's body is displayed in a hospital in Bolivia

The Hunt for Osama bin Laden

Inside the decade-long search for the Al-Qaeda mastermind of 9/11, from the mountains of Afghanistan to the dusty streets of Abbottabad, Pakistan

After the 9/11 attacks, Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda organisation were swiftly identified as the prime suspects. The Taliban, an extremist Islamic movement who governed Afghanistan, had given Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda shelter in exchange for their assistance during the Soviet-Afghan War in the 1980s and later during the bloody Afghan Civil War of the 1990s. The United States gave the Taliban an ultimatum to give up Bin Laden or suffer severe consequences. The request was ignored, so in October 2001, NATO air forces attacked Afghanistan.

However, by the time the bombing started, a CIA team codenamed Jawbreaker had already been in the country for two weeks. They had specific instructions: 'bring back the head of Bin Laden.' Their target had been sighted in Khost around the day of the 9/11 attacks but went to ground knowing that some form of US retaliation was likely. By November, with the Northern Alliance and US special operations forces closing in, Bin Laden relocated to Kabul. From there he and his number two, Ayman al-Zawahiri, fled to Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan.

As the Taliban government rapidly fell, Bin Laden retreated to the Spin Ghar ('White Mountain') Range and specifically Tora Bora ('Black Cave'). The terrorist leader was intimately familiar with the area as it had been a key mujahideen logistics hub during the Soviet-Afghan War. A US report described Tora Bora as "a collection of narrow valleys, snow-covered ridgelines and jagged peaks reaching 14,000 feet". The CIA followed.

In November 2001, a joint CIA and military special ops team ventured into the inhospitable region and began reporting on significant numbers of foreign fighters, probably Al-Qaeda, in the area. Soon this small team were guiding in American air strikes. They were reinforced by a US Army Special Forces ('Green Beret') detachment and by locally recruited Afghan militia paid for by the CIA. These militia were of dubious quality and questionable loyalty. However, under orders from the Pentagon, the US military and CIA were to keep a 'light footprint'.

The Black Cave

Because of increasing intelligence indicating the presence of Al-Qaeda High Value Targets (HVTs), a squadron from the elite Delta Force was also inserted into the fight at Tora Bora.

On numerous occasions the Delta operators managed to close in on Al-Qaeda remnants believed to be defending Bin Laden himself, but were forced to withdraw under orders to let the Afghans do the fighting. These local militia negotiated a truce with the Al-Qaeda forces after which the foreign fighters would supposedly surrender to the Afghans and their US allies. Not surprisingly, this was a deception designed

Air strikes in the Tora Bora mountains

HVT-1, himself: Osama bin Laden

"If we were going to embark on any kind of assault on this compound... we had to make darn sure that we knew what we were talking about" to enable the Al-Qaeda leadership to slip away, heading for Pakistan.

Why the mountain passes into Pakistan were not sealed is a bitterly contentious issue to this day. Both the Delta and CIA commanders requested the passes be mined and Army Rangers inserted to man-blocking positions but their calls fell on deaf ears and Bin Laden escaped the noose and disappeared from US radar. Gary Bernsten, commander of the CIA Jawbreaker team commented several years later: "We could have ended it all there".

From Tora Bora, Bin Laden, known as HVT-1 to the CIA, spent time in Peshawar and the notorious Swat Valley before relocating to a compound his faithful personal courier, Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, had commissioned to be built in the northern Pakistani city of Abbottabad. Abbottabad is also the home of the Pakistan Military Academy, a fact that led some observers to question later Pakistani denials about the whereabouts of Bin Laden.

The CIA and the military's Joint Special Operations Command, or JSOC, both felt that their target was in Pakistan, specifically sheltering

An Afghan mujahedin watches US bombings

EYEWITNESS John McPhee

Along with being both a former Ranger and Green Beret, John 'Shrek' McPhee is a veteran of America's most elite fighting unit; 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, better known as Delta Force. McPhee was part of a small Delta unit that entered the mountains of Tora Bora in December 2001 to hunt Osama bin Laden.

What was your mission in Tora Bora?
"Close the distance, find, fix and kill Bin Laden".

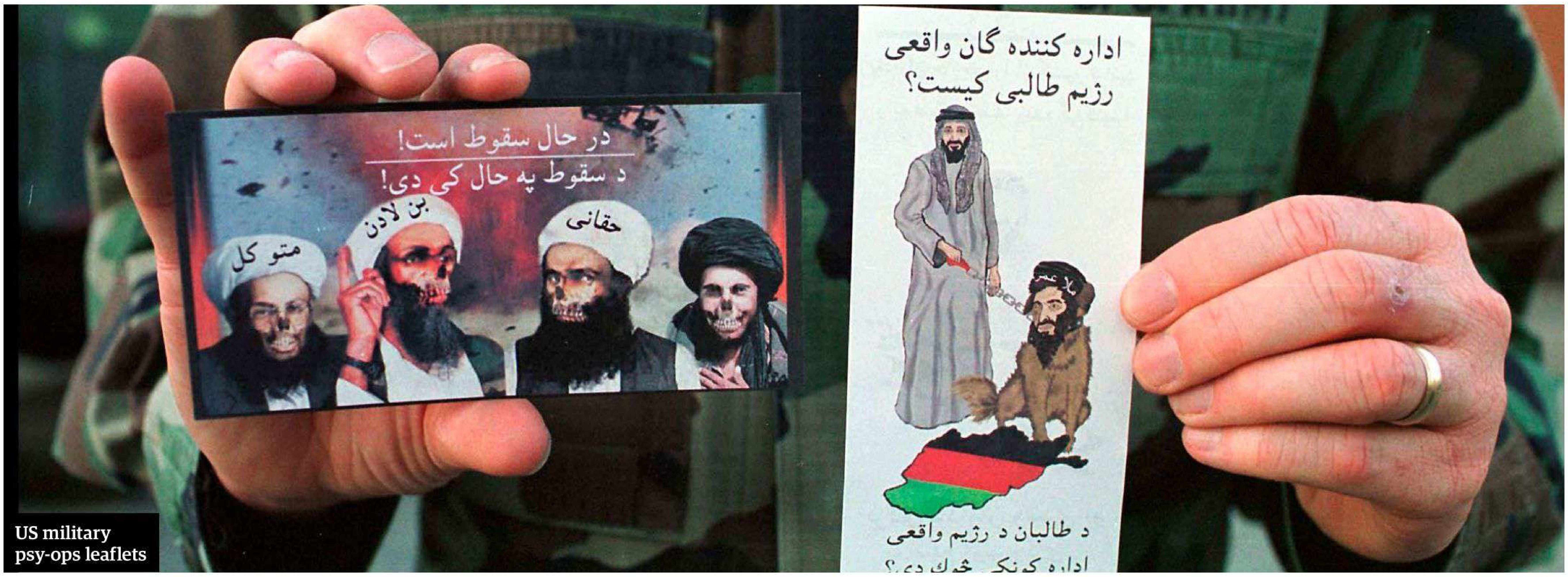
What was the quality of the locally recruited Afghan militia the CIA had recruited to fight alongside you?
"They completely sucked, (they) were ineffective and lacked the will to fight but that was our option at the time. We had to make do with what we had".

> "It took us ten guys in ten days to do what the Russians couldn't do in ten years"

Do you think the restrictions placed upon your unit by the Pentagon actively stymied your chances at killing Bin Laden?
"I don't think what Rumsfeld and Bush had in mind to kill OBL was an acceptable risk to the Pentagon. The Pentagon generals were extremely risk averse and lacked the will the see the mission through, to include (JSOC commander) Dell Dailey".

Given the opportunity to operate unilaterally away from the duplicitous militias and given the resources to seal the mountain passes into Pakistan, could your unit have killed or captured him?
"Yes, not only could we have bagged him but we failed because of our chain of command. It took us ten guys in ten days to do what the Russians couldn't do in ten years. We could have killed OBL in the first days of the war".

Below: The US was involved in airstrikes on Tora Bora during late 2001



US military psy-ops leaflets

in the Waziristan tribal areas, a safe haven for Al-Qaeda and Taliban fleeing US operations in Afghanistan. JSOC infiltrated a small team that worked undercover alongside the Pakistani Special Services Group hunting Al-Qaeda in the region. The Americans wore Pakistani uniforms to blend in but were constantly under the watchful eye of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) who ensured they knew the Americans' every move.

The CIA also infiltrated its own special operators into Pakistan using contractors assigned to the Special Activities Division to conduct human intelligence gathering, looking for the connection that would lead them to the Saudi terrorist. These operators were also monitored by ISI but the CIA had a long history in Pakistan and, working alongside British intelligence, the Agency had developed a significant array of assets at all levels of Pakistani society.

Into 2002, the US military remained focused on capturing or killing HVT-1. SEAL Team 6 maintained a troop of operators based at Bagram Air Base specifically tasked with going after Bin Laden should the Pentagon receive intelligence on his location. JSOC commander, General Stanley McChrystal, set a high standard for launch, however – he wanted an 80 per cent surety before he would authorise any such mission into Pakistan.

The team, known as the 'Bin Laden package', developed an operational protocol should Bin Laden be found. Up to a dozen operators would fly along the Pakistani border in a modified C-130 Hercules called a Combat Talon before exiting the aircraft at 25,000 feet and conducting a HAHO or High Altitude, High Opening parachute jump. Their steerable parachutes meant they could jump while still in Afghan airspace but glide up to 30 kilometres inside Pakistani territory.

Surveillance continued with JSOC flying customised Beechcrafts along the border, listening for specific mobile phone numbers known to be associated with Al-Qaeda leadership. Other JSOC signals intelligence personnel operated outside of the US Embassy in Islamabad but always in concert with a mistrustful ISI.

Their target, and his close associates, were also smart enough to minimise their electronic footprint, using physical couriers and hand-written letters and audiotapes rather than emails and mobile phones. The trail had grown cold and in 2005 Alec Station, the CIA's Bin Laden desk, was controversially shut down although evidence now suggests much of the CIA's efforts were covertly moved to Pakistan.

The Kuwaiti

Intelligence garnered from detainee interrogations, including that of the alleged 20th 9/11 hijacker who had been refused entry to the US but was later captured at Tora Bora, eventually pinpointed a man called Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti, the Al-Qaeda name of one Ibrahim Saeed Ahmed, a Kuwaiti national. It took from 2002 with the first identification of the possible existence of this high level Al-Qaeda courier, until 2007 before he was finally identified by his real name and his family traced. From this loose thread, the effort to hide the location of Bin Laden slowly began to unravel.

In 2007, JSOC and the CIA developed what they considered the first real actionable intelligence on Bin Laden since Tora Bora. Indeed, Operation Valiant Pursuit would see JSOC return to Tora Bora targeting a high level Al-Qaeda meeting that might include HVT-1. The scope of the mission widened to include a proposed airstrike by five B-2 Spirit stealth bombers that would pummel the location before the SEALs flew in to gather DNA and recover any bodies. Eventually, the meeting never occurred and the mission was scrubbed amid suspicions that the ISI may have tipped off the targets. After Admiral Bill McRaven took over the reins at JSOC in 2008, he advocated a renewed effort at flushing out Bin Laden from his supposed hiding place in the tribal areas. The first such operation, launched in September 2008, saw SEAL Team 6 enter a suspect compound in Southern Waziristan, but it ended in political disaster. The fallout from Pakistan convinced the Bush administration that such raids were counter-productive and all plans for similar operations were shelved indefinitely.

Timeline

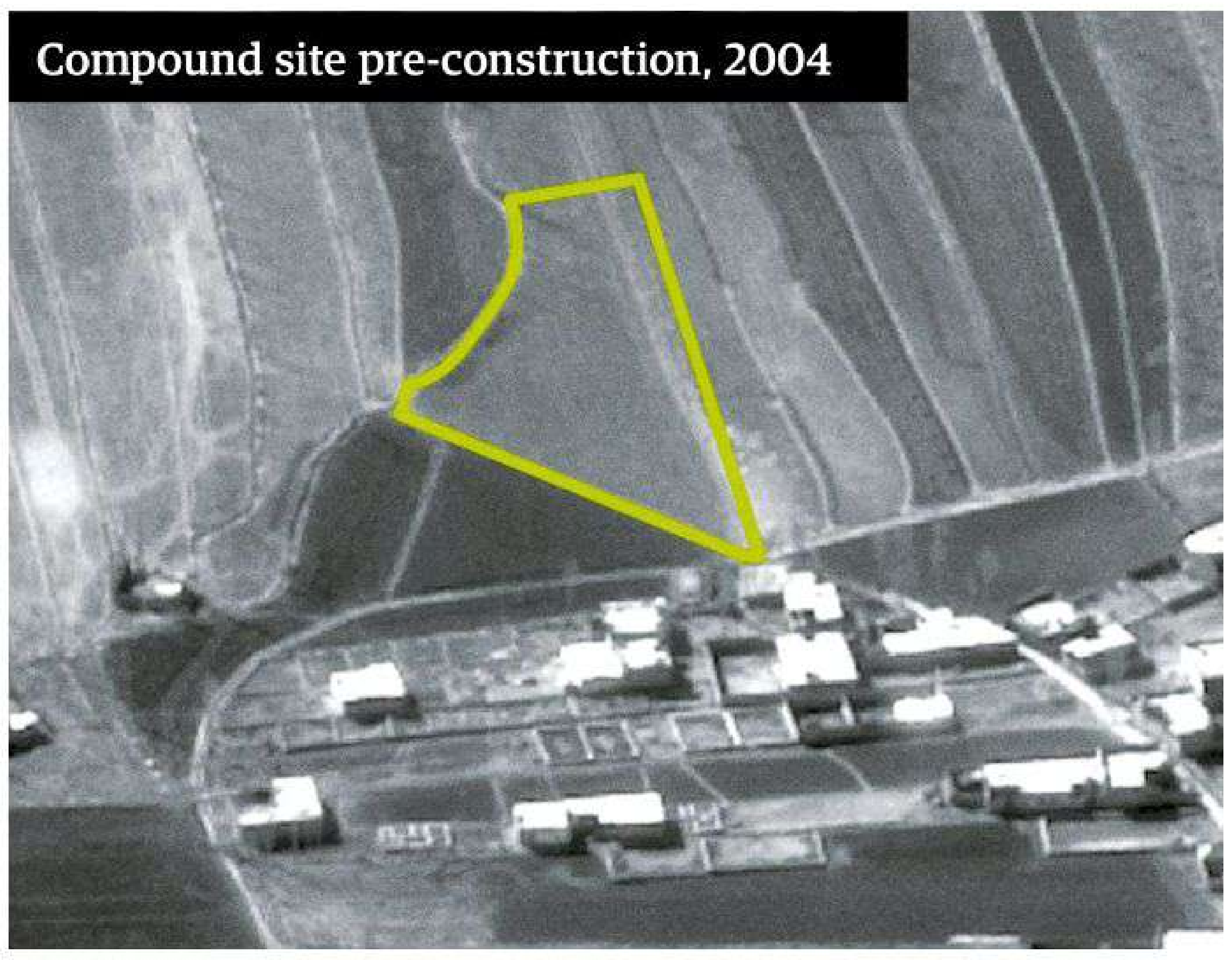
Tora Bora
US signals intelligence captures the last radio transmissions of OBL during the battle of Tora Bora. He narrowly avoids death at the hands of Delta Force and American airpower.
14 December 2001

The Tribal Lands
OBL arrives in Pakistan after escaping from Tora Bora. Based in Peshawar with his wives, he soon relocates to the Swat Valley where he is protected by Al-Qaeda.
27 December 2001

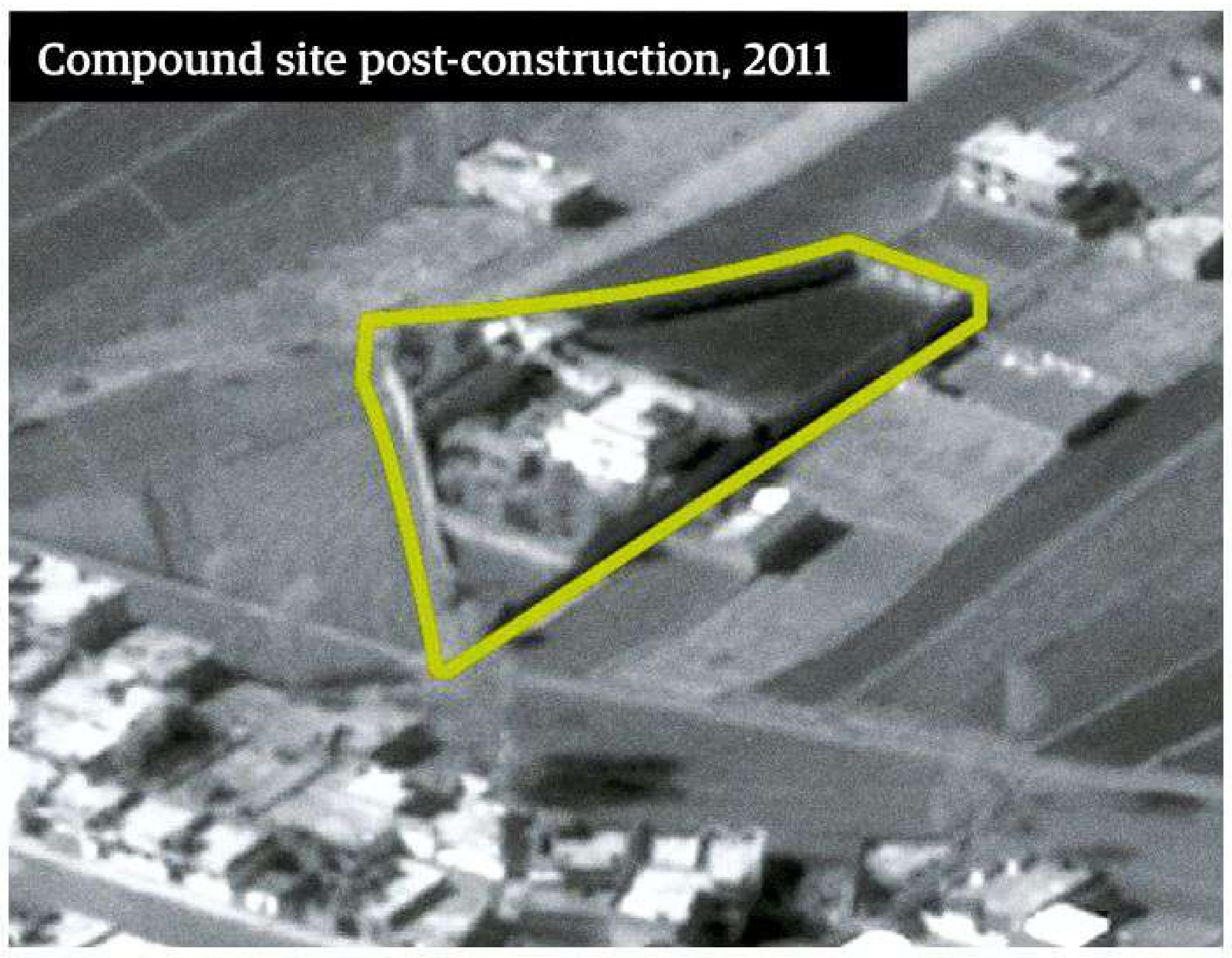
Hiding in Plain Sight
OBL and his family move into a specially built compound in Abbottabad, a city north of Islamabad. From here he uses couriers to pass messages to Al-Qaeda.
June 2005

Alec Shut Down
After years of no leads, the CIA close Alec Station, the Agency's Bin Laden unit that since 9/11 had been dedicated solely to the hunt for OBL.
October 2005

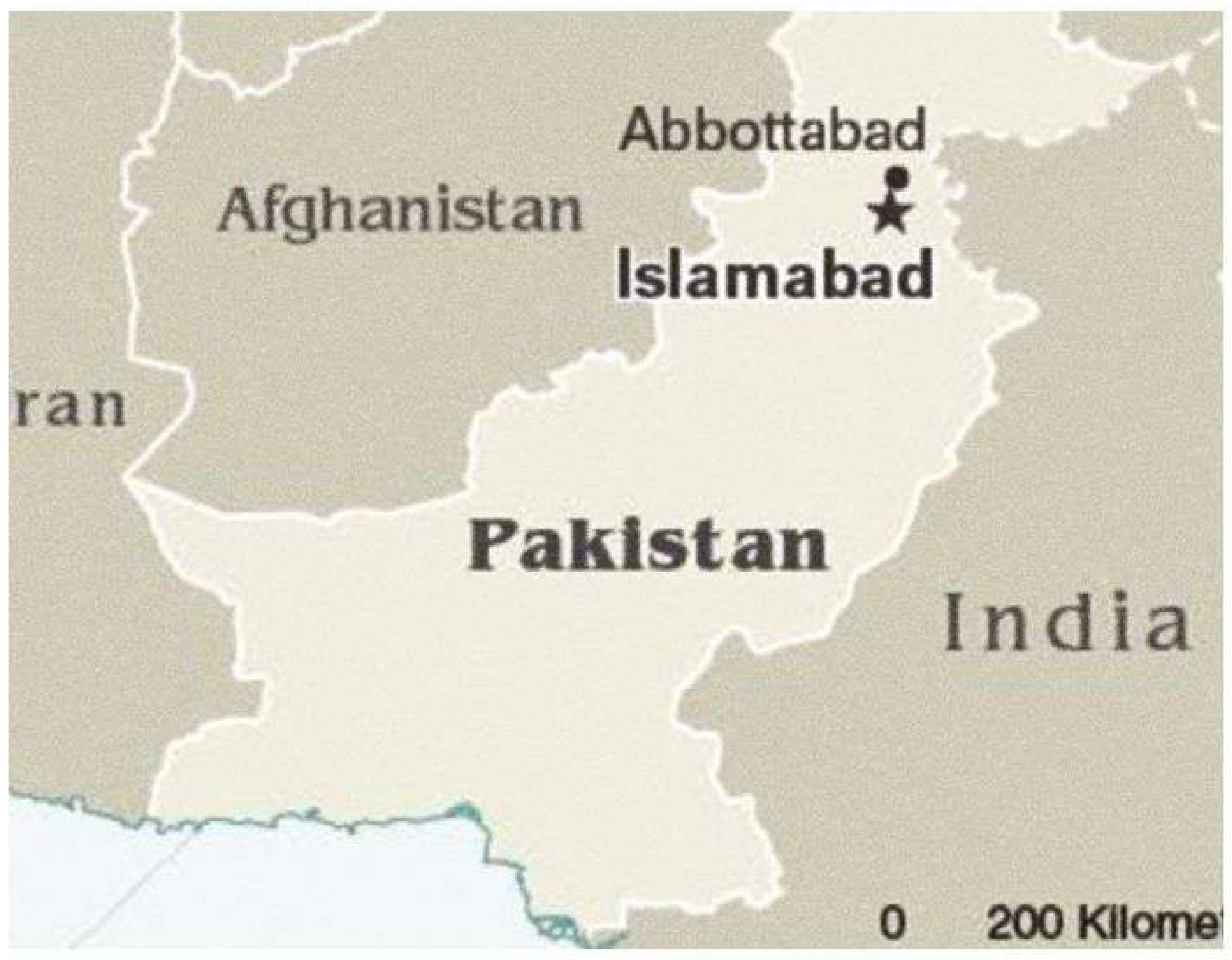
The Courier
Abu Ahmed al-Kuwaiti is identified as OBL's likely personal courier and all efforts are made by the NSA to locate al-Kuwaiti through signals intelligence intercepts.
June 2007

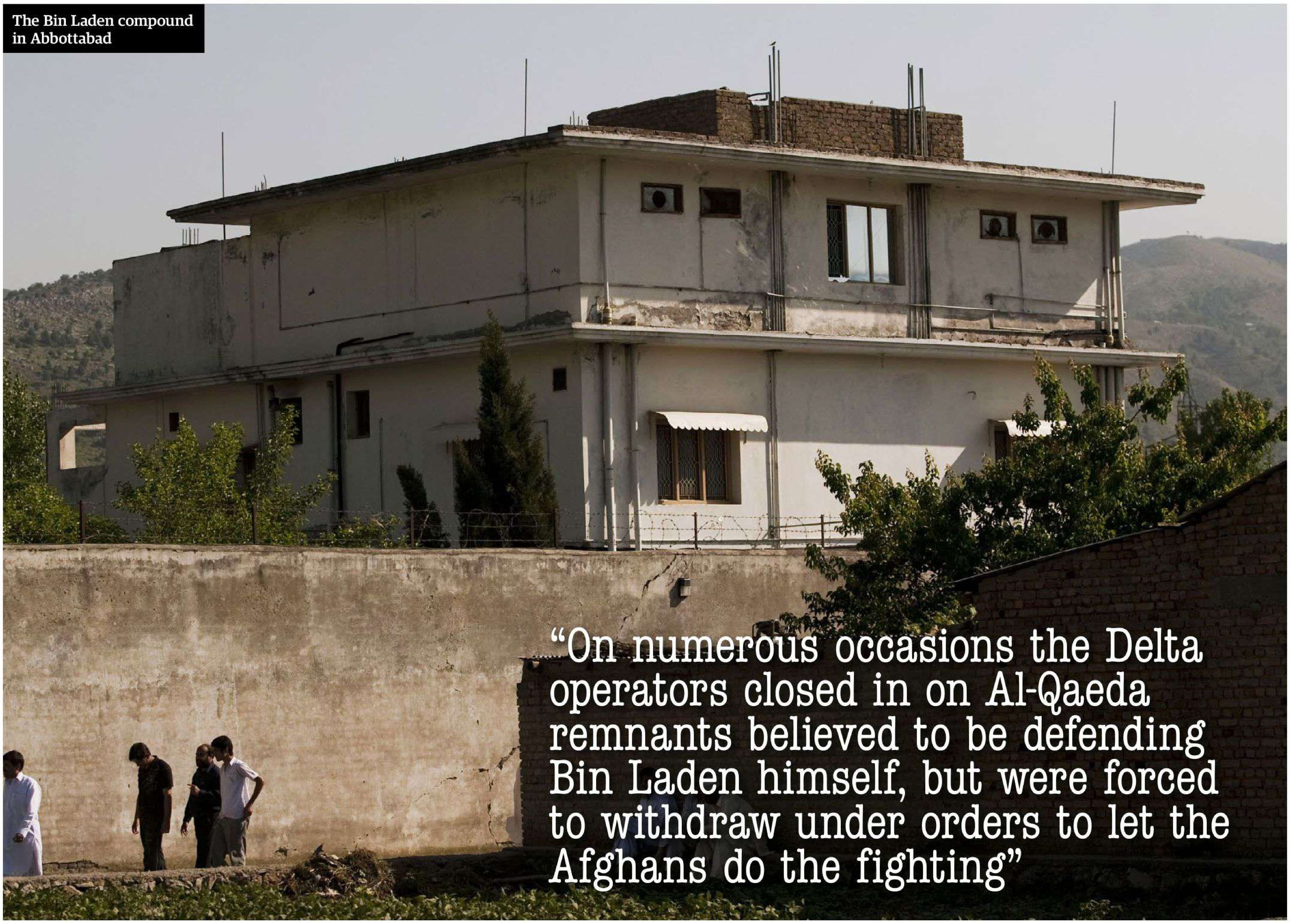


Compound site pre-construction, 2004



Compound site post-construction, 2011





The Bin Laden compound in Abbottabad

> "On numerous occasions the Delta operators closed in on Al-Qaeda remnants believed to be defending Bin Laden himself, but were forced to withdraw under orders to let the Afghans do the fighting"

Operation Valiant Pursuit
The US military plans a large-scale operation against an Al-Qaeda meeting on the Pakistan border thought to include OBL. The mission is eventually called off.
July 2008

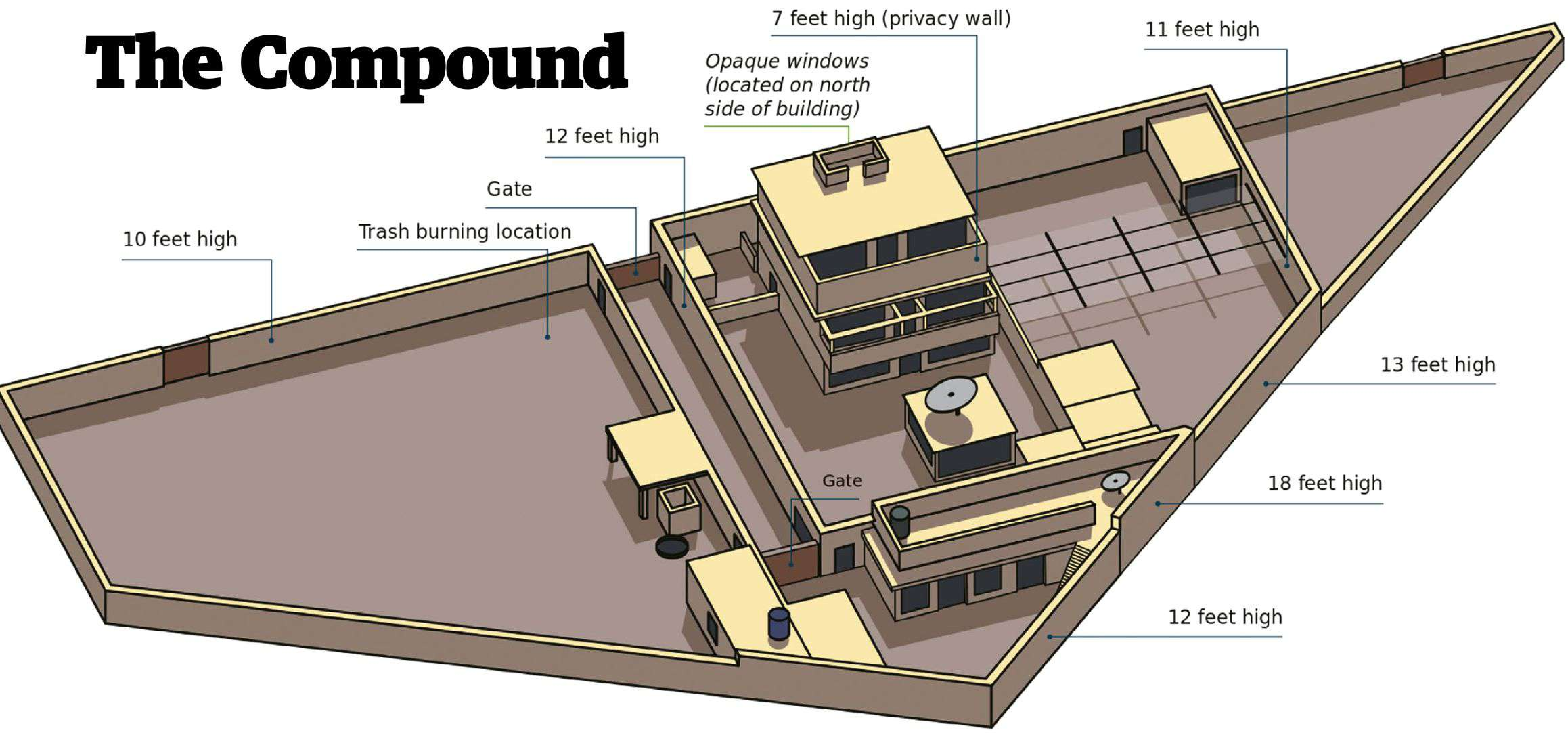
Objective Ax
US Navy SEALs assault a compound in Southern Waziristan capturing several low-level Al-Qaeda. The political fallout from Pakistan and alleged civilian casualties all but ends operations into Pakistan.
3 September 2008

The Net Closes In
The CIA – assisted by Pakistani ISI – intercepts the courier's mobile phone and he is eventually physically tracked by CIA operators to a suspect compound in Abbottabad.
July-August 2010

Informing the President
CIA Director Leon Panetta tells Obama "we think there is a strong possibility that Bin Laden is in the Abbottabad compound". Planning for an operation begins.
November 2010

The End
Operation Neptune Spear successfully locates and kills OBL in Abbottabad. His body is brought back to Afghanistan for identification and is buried at sea the following day.
1 May 2011

The Compound



> "The most dangerous parts of any operation would be getting into the target unseen and unannounced, and after completing the raid, getting out again"

It was only after the inauguration of President Barack Obama in 2009, that there was a new focus on the manhunt; "I directed Leon Panetta, the director of the CIA, to make the killing or capture of Bin Laden the top priority of our war against Al-Qaeda, even as we continued our broader efforts to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat his network". The National Security Agency (NSA) were tasked with scouring the airwaves and internet for any mention of the courier known as al-Kuwaiti, while the CIA, in concert with the ISI, conducted its own telephone tracing on the ground in Pakistan.

Atlantic City jackpot

In 2010, this renewed effort paid dividends with the identification of al-Kuwaiti's mobile phone number. Every call he made was intercepted by the NSA and transcribed by the CIA looking for clues that he was indeed Bin Laden's courier. The CIA began to feel that he was their best chance of finding Bin Laden. In August, an undercover CIA team driving locally procured vehicles followed al-Kuwaiti when he left Peshawar and travelled to Abbottabad.

Al-Kuwaiti led the surveillance team directly to a three-storey compound in Abbottabad that was later described to CIA Director Panetta as "a fortress" but one hidden in plain sight. Panetta was intrigued and ordered full 24-hour surveillance of the property from both ground and air. The CIA established a safe house nearby and even employed a Pakistani medical doctor to conduct a vaccination programme in an (unsuccessful) attempt to gain DNA samples to confirm the Bin Laden bloodline.

Drone footage spotted an individual that was soon nicknamed 'the Pacer' who took his or her daily exercise by walking around a vegetable patch in the compound. A tarpaulin covered the area in a possible counter-surveillance measure so the drones and satellites could never get a positive identification. The CIA had established that at least two families connected to al-Kuwaiti lived in the compound and remarkably the property had no telephone or internet access.

All of the evidence pointed at an important Al-Qaeda linked individual residing in the compound. President Obama himself later remarked: "If we were going to embark on any kind of assault on this compound… we had to make darn sure that we knew what we were talking about". An unprecedented surveillance effort was launched and confidence slowly increased that the Abbottabad compound, codenamed 'Atlantic City', was the one.

CIA analysts judged the probability of Bin Laden's presence anywhere between 60 and 80 per cent. President Obama was briefed on a number of options including a drone strike (discounted due to the comparatively small damage it could inflict) or a B-2 stealth bomber strike (conversely discounted due to the probability of collateral damage). All aerial options also had one fatal flaw – only boots on the ground could confirm whether Bin Laden was indeed in the compound. If they were wrong, a special operations raid would also cause less bloodshed than a bomb or missile.

What made the Abbottabad raid unusual was its location in Pakistan – the most dangerous parts of any operation would be getting into the target unannounced, and after completing the raid, getting out again. JSOC planners looked at everything from the typical response times of the Pakistan Air Force to what to do should any of the SEALs be captured.

On 29 April 2011, President Obama made the fateful decision; "It's a go". Finally, SEAL Team 6 would have their chance to go after Bin Laden in a mission suitably entitled Operation Neptune Spear. Admiral McRaven took personal charge, although the SEALs would be under the temporary command of the CIA once they crossed the border due to the requirements of US law. To ensure secrecy the decision was also made to keep the mission from the Pakistanis who would only be informed once the SEALs were safely back in Afghan airspace.

From there, Bin Laden's body was flown to the USS Carl Vinson, a US aircraft carrier in the north Arabian sea, where Bin Laden was prepared for burial. The body was then placed in a weighted bag and dropped into the water from the vessel's deck. The exact location remains top secret to prevent his grave from becoming a shrine.

Images: Getty

Operation Neptune Spear – Abbottabad, Pakistan

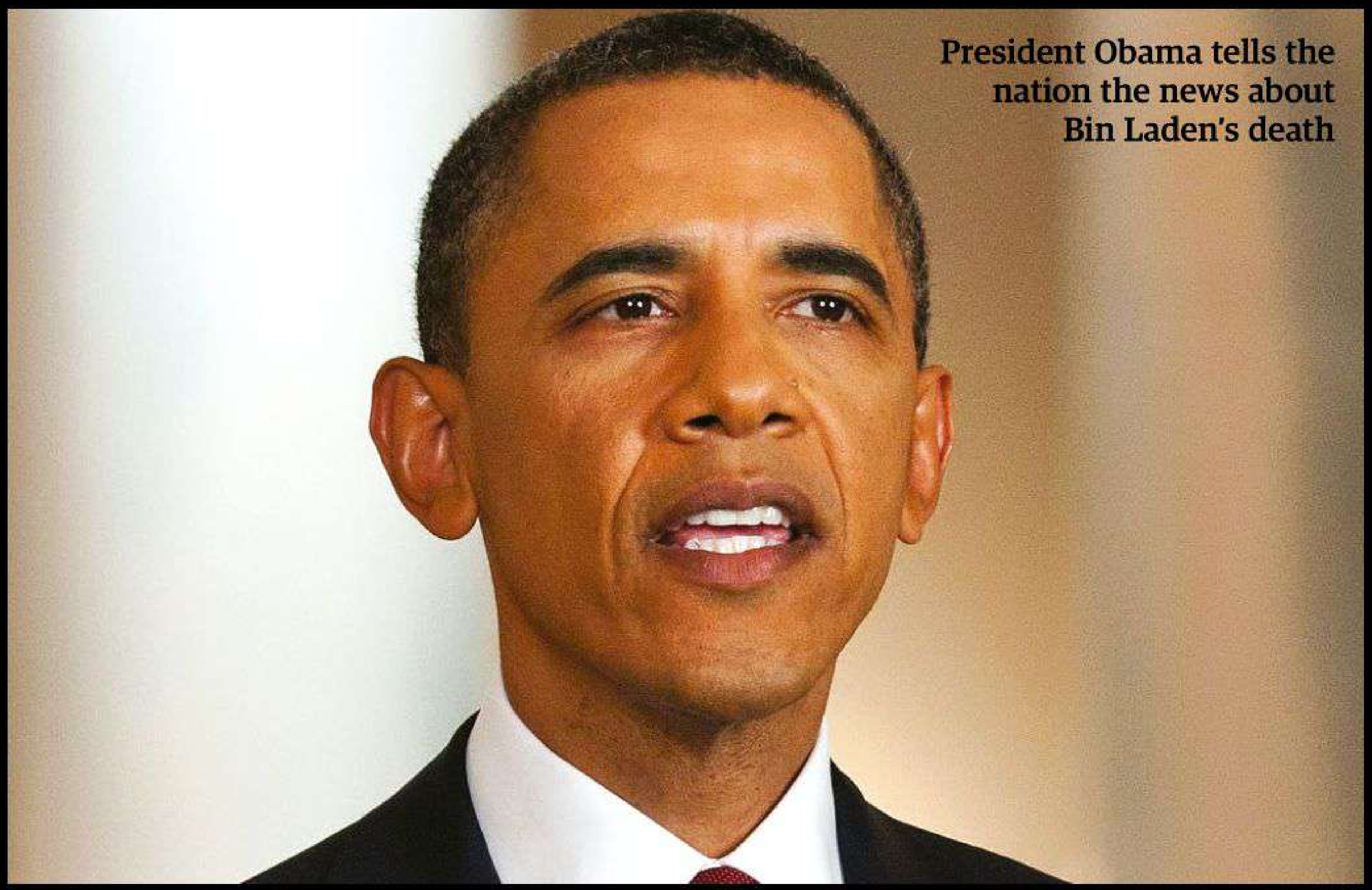
A select group of veteran SEALs from SEAL Team 6's Red Squadron were chosen by Admiral McRaven to conduct the mission. The SEALs were clear that the operation was a kill mission and Osama bin Laden would be shot unless he was found with his hands in the air and clearly surrendering

To reach the compound the SEALs would fly through Pakistani airspace in specialised stealth Black Hawks called the MH-X or Stealth Black Hawk. Although able to fly undetected through enemy radar, the experimental helicopters were somewhat unstable and difficult to fly. Each Hawk would carry a dozen operators from the 23 SEALs selected for the mission, along with a CIA interpreter and a SEAL Combat Assault Dog named Cairo. Just before midnight on 1 May 2011, these MH-Xs and their supporting Chinooks lifted off from Jalalabad and headed east toward Abbottabad. US electronic warfare assets blacked out the power grid as the helicopters approached, meaning the SEALs would have the advantage of near complete darkness. One of the MH-Xs ran into trouble as it attempted to hover to allow its complement of SEALs to fast rope into the compound – a unique and dangerous state called 'settling with power' that meant a helicopter cannot stay aloft under its own power. Only the skill of the pilots saved the mission from disaster as the MH-X made a hard landing inside the compound walls.

Having experienced similar crashes on past missions, the SEALs climbed out and continued with their mission. The operators swept through the compound, blowing in gates and quickly silencing the minimal resistance they encountered. As one team moved carefully up to the top floor of the main building where the CIA indicated Bin Laden would likely be found, the lead SEAL spotted a head pop out from a doorway. The SEAL fired two rounds from his suppressed HK416 carbine and the head disappeared. Clearing the room, the SEALs then discovered Bin Laden on the floor with a bullet wound through his left eye. As the SEALs began a hasty search for intelligence the news was radioed back to Jalalabad, the Pentagon and the White House Situation Room – "Geronimo EKIA" using the CIA's code name for Bin Laden and declaring him "Enemy Killed-In-Action".

Finally the ten year search was over in a scant 38-minute operation on the ground in Pakistan. His body was flown out of Pakistan with the SEALs and formally identified via DNA samples extracted by the operators before being transported to the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson. He would be buried at sea as Saudi Arabia had refused to receive his body. After being prepared in accustom to Islamic tradition, Bin Laden's body was dropped into the sea. President Obama appeared on national television to announce; "Tonight, I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qaeda". The largest manhunt in modern history was finally over. The architect of 9/11, Osama bin Laden, was dead.

USS Carl Vinson


President Obama tells the nation the news about Bin Laden's death

President Obama and other officials watch the siege of Bin Laden's compound, 1 May 2011

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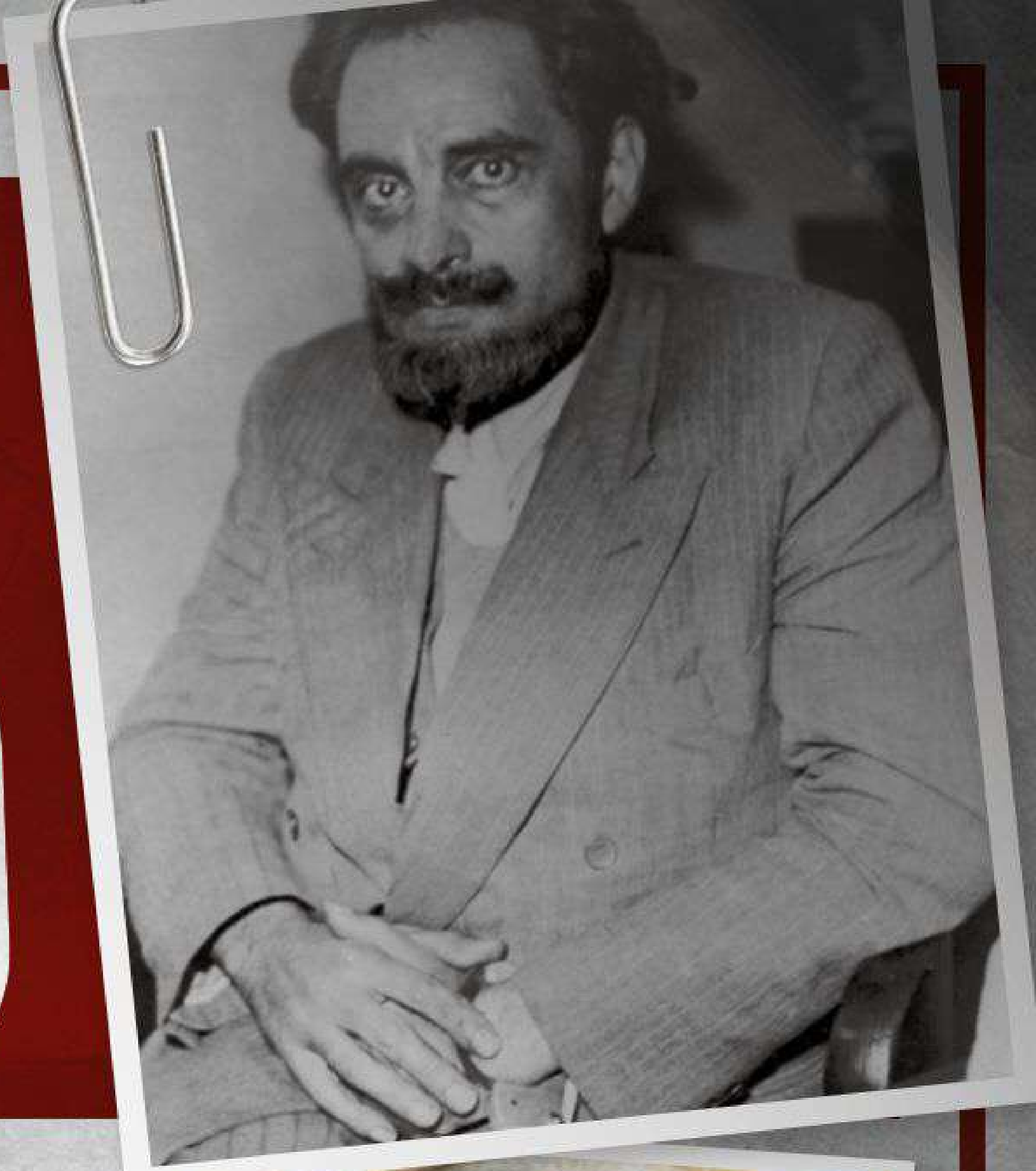

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